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# INTEGRATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION/SPECIAL EDUCATION IN A TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM: A FEASIBILITY STUDY

by

Darlo Albrecht

(C)

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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Supervisor

Date April 6, 1984

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate and assess the need for changes in present Early Childhood Education teacher preparation programs in light of the current trend toward integration of special needs children into regular classrooms.

Early childhood teachers, special education teachers, and professionals in various educational capacities were approached via a questionnaire and interviews. These instruments were designed to elicit opinions on the possible need for revisions in present teacher education programs and to determine future directions for preparing early childhood educators.

Results of the study indicated support for changes in teacher education programs. Early childhood and special education teachers alike felt their initial training had not prepared them to deal effectively with young special needs children.

Teachers identified courses taken during their initial training which had proven useful. The teachers and other professionals interviewed made suggestions as to skills and knowledge required by an early childhood teacher working with special needs children in a regular classroom.

Responses indicated the need for equipping early childhood teachers with special strategies for teaching and

assessing handicapped children, knowledge of handicapping conditions, a better understanding of child development (both general and special), observation and diagnostic skills, an awareness of support services, an understanding of referral procedures, and interpersonal skills.

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# CHAPTER I

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Integration of handicapped children into regular classes is an issue which has surfaced mainly within the last decade. The objective of the program is to give handicapped children a more normal existence within society, with the same opportunity for adequate social adjustment and maximum school achievement which is assumed for the non-handicapped (Csapo & Goguen, 1980).

Large scale integration is a relatively new concept. Policies are influenced by current trends. According to Csapo and Goguen (1980), public opinion for comprehensive educational services for the exceptional child has been influenced by three major trends in the last decade: the Report of the Commission on Emotional and Learning Disorders in Children (CELDIC Report, 1970), Public Law 94-142 in the United States (1975), and the International Year of the Child (1979).

Karaganis and Nesbitt (1979) describe the CELDIC Report as "an international document which has had profound influence in shaping and determining the direction of special education both in and outside of Canada" (in Csapo & Goguen, 1980, p. 176). The Committee on Emotional and

Learning Disorders in Children was established in 1966 to set up a committee of professionals who engaged in a comprehensive, nationwide study of at least one million children in Canada who required attention and treatment because of emotional and learning disorders. The Commission filed its report in 1970. It strongly recommended that exceptional children be integrated into regular classrooms rather than placed in special classes within a school. "Too often we found that children and their teachers were socially almost as isolated in their special classes as were those in segregated schools" (CELDIC Report, 1970, p. 95).

A second major influence on Canadian policies was The Education for All Handicapped Children Act. This legislation was enacted by the United States Congress in 1975 and is known as Public Law 94-142. The law guarantees free appropriate education for all children and youth. This sensitized Canadian educators, school administrations, parents, and legislators to the need for a policy review and development (Csapo & Goguen, 1980).

The International Year of the Child in 1979 was the third influence. One of the principles of the United Nations "Declaration of the Rights of the Child" states that those children who are physically, mentally, or socially disadvantaged, shall receive the treatment, education, and special care required by their state or situation (Csapo &

Goguen, 1980).

Some of the provinces have responded by implementing legislation mandating integration of the handicapped, while others are implementing it on a piecemeal basis, as a result of public pressure and political expediency (Csapo & Goguen, 1980). In Alberta, there has been some pressure for specific legislative reference both to handicapped children and the responsibility of school boards to provide programs for these children (Church, 1980). School jurisdictions were forced into facing the issue as a result of the judicial decision reached in 1978 on the Carriere case. Prior to this decision a significant number of children were denied suitable educational programs because of their handicapping conditions. The court decision did not delineate the education a child must receive nor guarantee that the child would be educated within the local school system. However, if a suitable educational program is not available, the board must arrange for a program in another district and assume responsibility for the costs involved. Further, a child cannot be excused from school on a long term basis because of a handicap as was formerly the case. As a result of the Carriere case proceedings, school boards have had to assume responsibility for meeting the educational needs of handicapped children. This has implications for all teachers (Report of Task Force on

Integration of Handicapped School-Age Children into Regular Classes, ATA, 1981).

In a report prepared by the College of Law at the University of Saskatchewan (Scratching the Surface: A Report on Legal Issues Concerning Disabled Persons, 1980), a similar opinion was expressed:

> Where children are being kept out of school because of a physical or emotional disability and where no alternative is provided, parents can argue that their children should be in the regular classrooms. The board must provide schooling and faced with expensive special education programs or out-of-district placements, they may opt for the regular classroom. (p. 212)

For years most classroom teachers have not had to deal directly with children with special needs. Conflicting feelings about working with handicapped children in regular classrooms was minimal because the children were either placed in institutions, segregated classrooms in seperate buildings, or special classrooms within a regular school (Shapiro, 1979).

Until 1917 most handicapped children in Alberta were cared for at home, the exception being the deaf and the blind who were sent out of province. Beginning in 1917, "homes" for the mentally defective were opened. At the same time school boards in Calgary and Edmonton established classes for the educable mentally retarded. In 1932 classes

were established for the visually impaired, but the first classes for the hearing impaired did not open until 1946. The twenty year period from 1950 to 1970 saw rapid growth in special education. The Department of Education extended grants to assist in the education of children with various handicaps, schools for the deaf and blind were established, and funds were provided for private schools for the trainable mentally retarded (Csapo & Goguen, 1980).

In 1971 the new government of the time made the education of the handicapped one of its priorities. This was reflected both in the great increase in existing programs and the introduction of new programs for the handicapped. The establishment of Early Childhood Services (known as ECS), had a dramatic effect on the education of the preschool handicapped. The ECS policy was to integrate handicapped children into regular programs so as to allow for early identification and remediation (Csapo & Goguen, 1980).

Early Childhood Services was initiated in 1973 as a program designed to integrate recreational, social, health, educational and other services for young children and their families. The program's initial priority was to provide services for children with handicaps and those from geographical areas which lacked educational services (Evaluation of the ECS Program in Alberta, 1978). In actual

fact, according to Phair (1982), the bulk of planning and funding went to the establishment of kindergartens to serve all children four and one-half years of age. Now the focus has shifted to the handicapped and disadvantaged. Phair stated that all children are to be enrolled in programs appropriate to their needs. Children with handicaps may be enrolled in early childhood programs as early as two and one-half to three and one-half years of age, depending upon their disability, and they may stay in the program one year beyond kindergarten if necessary.

Every ECS funded program must have a certified teacher with a Bachelor of Education degree in Early Childhood or sufficient course work in the area of early childhood education to qualify for the ECS Diploma. There is no requirement for special education course work even though the program may integrate special needs children.

Special Education Services provides funding and guidelines for programs for handicapped children beyond the jurisdiction of ECS. Except for the six private schools for the trainable mentally retarded, it is the responsibility of each local school board to decide what programs will be offered. Special Educational Services' guidelines state only that the child shall be educated in the least restrictive environment which may or may not be a regular classroom. There are no requirements that teachers of

handicapped children have any special education courses.

Since the decision to integrate or not to integrate handicapped children into regular classes is left to the discretion of each local school board, it is an issue which any teacher may have to confront. ECS assumes that, wherever possible, children with special needs will be placed in regular preschool programs. The early childhood teacher will almost certainly have to deal with children with various handicaps and it is a situation for which few teachers are adequately prepared.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate and assess the need for an integrated early childhood-special education teacher preparation program at the undergraduate level. The study will describe the courses common to both early childhood education and special education, and the types of course work which teachers presently in the field have found useful in preparing them to teach young children with special needs. Suggestions will be solicited from teachers as to skills and knowledge they think necessary but presently lacking in teacher preparation programs. Officials in Early Childhood Services, School Board Consultants, University Instructors representing early

childhood education and special education, and other resource personnel will be interviewed regarding their perceptions of requirements in preparing teachers of young children in an integrated setting. Recommendations will be made in terms of an appropriate integrated program and suggestions for future directions for establishment of such a program at the University of Alberta.

## RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Alberta Education assumes that all children will be enrolled in regular classrooms unless and until it has been established by a complete assessment, through appropriate psychological and educational tests, that the child requires placement in a special education program. As well, parents must give approval of the placement (Criteria for Approval of Special Education Teaching Position Grants and Program Units: Basic Education, October, 1981). This has particular significance for the early childhood teacher since virtually all but the most severely handicapped children will be placed (at least initially) in regular ECS programs.

For several reasons, the obvious time to integrate handicapped children into regular classes is at the preschool level. First, younger children are more accepting

of other children than are older ones (Kennedy & Bruininks, 1974). Children around four years of age appear to become aware of physical handicap (Jones & Sisk, 1967). The integrated preschool group provides a favorable opportunity to minimize the development of negative attitudes which are apt to appear at this age. Some researchers suspect that educable mentally retarded children are socially rejected more likely because of behavioral problems than because of the handicap (Goodman, Gottlieb, & Harrison, 1972). Early integration with more advanced peers would be beneficial in modifying these behaviors before the child enters the elementary school.

Secondly, integration at the preschool level allows for early intervention and remediation. Kennedy and Bruininks (1974) found that hearing handicapped children who were integrated with normally hearing children at the preschool level (along with special preschool services such as language and auditory training) were socially as accepted as the normally hearing children.

Most handicapped children, whether the handicap be mental or physical, are somewhat delayed in many areas of development. Integrated preschool programs provide a number of potential opportunities for nonhandicapped children to serve as models whereby the less advanced handicapped children may gain in social, language, and imitative

behaviors (Guralnick, 1976). However, Devony, Guralnick, and Rubin (1974) and Porter, Ramsay, Tremblay Iaceobo, and Crawley in 1978 (see Katz, 1979) found there were few spontaneous social interactions between handicapped and nonhandicapped children; not until the teacher systematically structured the situation, using nonhandicapped children to promote various interactions, did marked increases in social interactions occur. Therefore, teachers must have knowledge in special procedures to encourage and support such interactions.

Many children with disabilities have a low self-image and often feel shy, awkward, and incompetent. Other children may react to the lack of confidence and the poor self-esteem of the disabled child rather than to the disability itself. The primary goal of integration at the preschool level is to facilitate the overall positive behavioral, attitudinal, and emotional development of the handicapped child (Allen, 1980). The help required by a child with a handicap must be provided "as a right and in such a way that it enhances the child's self-esteem, both in his eyes and in the eyes of others" (CELDIC Report, 1970, p. 10).

Early childhood teachers must be able to deal with the very complex problems of handicapped children without neglecting the needs of the other children. Many teachers,

because they lack knowledge of and experience with handicapped children, feel inadequate to meet the needs of both handicapped and nonhandicapped children at the same time. Evaluation of Programs for Learning Disabled Students in Edmonton Public Schools (1980) notes that 84% of elementary teachers indicated changes in teaching methods would be necessary if learning disabled students were integrated for instruction in their classrooms. In a study done in Victoria, B.C. exploring the attitudes of preschool teachers toward integration, Dyson and Kubo (1980) found that 46% of the responding teachers listed further teacher training in special education as a necessary requisite for accepting handicapped children in their classes.

Barros (1983) found that teacher preparation for integration at the preschool level in both rural and urban areas varied substantially from a few inservice courses through correspondence courses, workshops, to actual university preparation. She concluded that teacher preparation seemed minimal in both groups. In the urban sample, for instance, nine out of twelve teachers had no pre-training whatsoever related to special needs children. Seventy-three percent of teachers in the urban sample and 70% of the rural teachers felt their training was inadequate.

Biemiller (1981) stated that one of the conditions

necessary for successful integration of handicapped children into regular classes is the development of training procedures for day care and school staff who will be involved. The Alberta Teachers' Association concurs:

> In light of the current trend towards integration and the fact that most teachers will have children with special needs in their classrooms, it is desirable that a course on handicapped children be a required component of Alberta university teacher preparation programs. The absence of such a mandatory course will result in many teachers being inadequately prepared to meet the needs of the children in their classrooms.....(ATA Task Force on Integration of Handicapped School-age Children into Regular Classes, 1981).

The College of Law at the University of Saskatchewan, through the Legal Rights of Disabled Persons Project, published "Scratching the Surface: A Report on Legal Issues Concerning Disabled Persons" (1981) in which the legal aspect of education for the disabled was examined. It was suggested that there are two legal avenues open to parents who feel that their handicapped children are not receiving quality education. These avenues are:

(a) Education Malpractice:
Educational malpractice suits have been brought in where school systems failed to teach grade eight students to read at a minimal level. Canadian law on negligence could invite a similar approach. If a student fails to achieve the educational level he would have

> obtained if the teacher had executed his duties at the required level. he could have an action for damages against the teacher or school board. Where a disabled child is being taught, the teacher should perform at a level which would benefit that disabled pupil. (p. 265).

(b) Misrepresentation:
Misrepresentation is a concept from contract law. The taxpayer and parent are entitled to expect a minimum level of education, appropriate to the child's needs in every "graduate" of the school system. Also, it could be used in the situation where a teacher fails to take reasonable care to accurately evaluate the child. A great deal depends on a proper assessment thus the teacher could be held liable for not exercising reasonable care, if the child is denied the proper help because of this. (p. 266).

In the opinion of Johnson and Cartwright (1979), traditional teacher training programs, which often remain at the abstract level, may not be adequate for changing attitudes toward, and providing skill for, integration. Methods combining information and experience are generally lacking. At the present time it appears that none of the universities or teacher training institutions in Canada provide a program which will prepare early childhood teachers to deal with handicapped children integrated into regular classes. There is a definite need for such a program at the University of Alberta.

## PROCEDURE FOR THE STUDY

1. Information was collected on early childhood and special education teacher training programs available in Canada.
2. A questionnaire was distributed to 100 kindergarten, grade one, and special education teachers in the city of Edmonton and to 40 kindergarten and grade one teachers in the County of Parkland. In Edmonton, 50 questionnaires were sent to schools which contained special education classes, while the remainder were sent to schools chosen at random. The 40 questionnaires sent to the County of Parkland were distributed on a random basis by the ECS consultant. The purpose of the questionnaires was twofold: (1) to collect data regarding teachers' perceptions of strengths and inadequacies in their training, and (2) to assess the need for an integrated early childhood-special education teacher preparation program.
3. A random selection of 10% of the respondents was interviewed for further elaboration and information.
4. Interviews were conducted with officials in Early Childhood Services, School Board Consultants, the Director of Special Education in the County of Lacombe,

a Program Teacher, the Director of the Alberta Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (Edmonton), and University professors in both early childhood education and special education. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain their perceptions of skills and knowledge essential for teachers working in integrated classrooms.

5. Recommendations were made for future directions of teacher education programs which would prepare early childhood education teachers for special needs children integrated into regular classes.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

Handicap: used for hearing, visual, or speech impairment, mental retardation, learning disability, physical health impairment (orthopedic, epilepsy, diabetes, and so forth), cerebral palsy, social and emotional maladjustment, and developmental delay.

Integration: the practice of placing handicapped children in regular classes with their nonhandicapped peers.

Most enabling environment: the environment which will best enable children to reach their full potential in terms of development and learning, whether it be full integration, partial integration, or a special class.

## LIMITATIONS

1. Generalizations drawn from responses of teachers in or near a larger urban centre may not be representative of Alberta teachers as a whole.

2. There were no teacher training programs in Canadian universitites which appeared to prepare early childhood teachers for dealing with special needs children integrated into regular classes, so there were no models from which to draw. Therefore, the study had to focus on the choices of programs offered at the University of Alberta.

# CHAPTER II

## RELATED LITERATURE

On the surface, integration appears to be a "natural" arrangement, with handicapped and nonhandicapped children in the same area, resulting in benefits to both groups. The handicapped children will benefit by observing more advanced peers and the nonhandicapped children will develop an increased understanding of, and sensitivity to individual differences. Unfortunately, it is not that simple. According to Siefert (1981), we have begun the process of integration more from faith in its humaneness than from knowledge that it actually works.

In preparation of "Research on Early Childhood Education: State of the Art Review" (1981), Biemiller spoke to professionals across Canada. He stated that most of them had expressed strong concern that integration of handicapped children into regular classes is being implemented and encouraged with little examination of the conditions necessary for success. Educators have had to implement integration without the benefit of any studies of the interaction between fields; that is, the implementation, operation, and evaluation of integration in terms of benefits to handicapped children.

There are many practical problems to be faced if the integration movement is to be successful. Some of these problems stem from misconceptions about integration, underlying political issues, concerns of many teachers over new demands for performance, professional attitudes toward general and special education, and the attitudes of all those connected with the educational system including teachers, administrators, students, and parents. However, the benefits of integration for handicapped children are such that attempts to solve the problems are worthwhile. Since "it will be principally teachers who will eventually determine whether mainstreaming really works" (Siefert, 1981, P. 35), they must be properly prepared for their role. The CELDIC Report States:

> .....to close special classes without preparing the regular classroom teacher to meet the child's needs would be folly; to expect the teacher to assume this responsibility without adequate training and community support would be unthinkable.....(p. 142).

## PROBLEMS RELATED TO INTEGRATION

### Misconceptions about Integration

A common misconception about integration is that it means that every special needs child will be in a regular classroom without adequate support from special educators.

The "least restrictive environment" is not necessarily the regular classroom for all children. Some educators prefer the term "most enabling environment" which implies that children will be put in the environment which will best enable them to reach their full potential in terms of development and learning (Sunderlin, 1979). This could mean full integration for the child who is mildly handicapped and so can take part to a large degree in all classroom activities (with perhaps minor modifications to accommodate the handicap). This would differ little from changes made to accommodate the wide range of abilities of children in any average classroom. Some handicapped children may be able to remain in the classroom with the help of an aide but no other support services. Children who are handicapped because of a specific learning disability may take part in all classroom activities with a special educator working with them at specific times in the classroom, or they may spend part of the day in a resource room. Other children may be best served in a special class and be integrated only for certain activities. Still others may benefit by full or partial integration in the early childhood years, followed by a special class within a school. According to Ames (1982):

> Being placed in the regular class..... is for many a desirable condition to be demanded. Every child is an individual, in school as in other areas of living, and what is suitable for some is not suitable for all (p. 240).

Brockman (1982) believes that most handicapped children benefit socially, emotionally, and intellectually by being fully integrated at the preschool level. She maintains that preschool programs can be adapted to meet the needs of all children because the difference in developmental level is not so great that children cannot be placed at or near their developmental level. As the developmental gap widens with age (as in the mentally retarded), there is a point at which the handicapped no longer benefit by integration, except on a very limited basis. She stressed that failure to be realistic may be a great disservice to the very people we are striving to benefit, handicapped children. Brockman's view is supported by Waters (1979) who stated, "The goal of mainstreaming must be that of reaching the needs of each child and not serving a cause" (p. 53).

## Underlying Political Issues

The aforementioned events of the past decade have caused the public to become aware of the educational plight of many handicapped children for whom there were no suitable programs. As a result, pressure has been brought to bear upon governments, school administrations, and teachers to improve the situation for these children. Unfortunately, there is a lack of consensus as to the best course of action to achieve this goal. While some groups approach the

problem from the perspective of "equal rights" of the handicapped to the same education as that provided for the normal child, some parents of both handicapped and nonhandicapped children are hesitant about integration. Many teachers have responded negatively because they feel unqualified and anxious over new demands for performance.

All of the provincial and territorial governments have responded by endorsing the concept of integration but, as of 1980, only six had actually enacted legislation pertaining to the right of the handicapped in regard to educational services and the responsibilities of school boards in providing programs for them. However, it appears that even where legislation is in place, the type of service to be provided for the handicapped child is left in the hands of local school boards who respond to the social climate of their particular districts (Csapo & Goguen, 1980). Some universities across Canada have responded by revising the Bachelor of Education Degree to allow for a special education major or area of concentration but most appear to prepare teachers for special education classes rather than for regular classes which include children with special needs.

Much of the problem, according to Little (1980), lies within the manner of government funding to universities and the structure within the universities themselves. Post

secondary institutions experience external constraints in their operations in that operating budgets are closely scrutinized and all requests for new or modified programs are reviewed for approval, and funding is carefully controlled. The ability to respond quickly enough to perceived change is significantly reduced owing to budget planning which is usually for expenditures three years hence but based on present conditions and thinking. Within the universities and colleges themselves there are often complex committee structures, faculty autonomy, and multi-layered decision levels which result in delays and bureaucratic inertia.

> Faculties are expected to hew to the line or risk the wrath of disciplines fighting for survival in the academic community; i.e., resisting change in a no-win situation. Territory sensibilities with possible rivaling among faculty to preserve the status quo, or to protect their teaching positions, tend to inhibit the accomodation of needed change (Csapo & Goguen, 1980, p. 248).

Until the governments who control funding take a clear stand on the question of integration, the present change-inhibiting atmosphere is likely to remain. In their traditional capacity as bastions of academic freedom and independence of thought and action (Little, 1980), universities and colleges should be among those in the forefront of the movement to provide an appropriate

education for all children. They could do this by putting pressure on governments to provide the funding necessary to prepare teachers for the task, and by setting aside campus politics and faculty rivalries which inhibit innovation and change. To date this has not happened.

## Concerns of Teachers

Due to the emergence in the past several years of special classes and resource rooms, regular classroom teachers have been far removed from the special education setting in most senses of the word. Their major role has been the referral of suspected learning or behavior problem children through the various channels leading to identification and the removal of them to special classes. When integration is instituted, that same teacher may be given the responsibility of absorbing the same students into the regular class, probably with minimum support services (usually only a resource room). Furthermore the special education teacher in the resource room very often has been trained to teach children with specific handicaps, such as mental retardation, rather than a wide range of handicaps (McIntosh, 1979).

## Professional Attitudes Toward General and Special Education

The practice of placing handicapped children in special classes has resulted in the involvement of two kinds of

education, "regular or general" and "special". Preparation for special education has been regarded as something identifiably different, requiring specialists, extra courses, special practica, special competencies development; in other words, for the expert (Little, 1980).

There is an apparent conflict of ideologies between early childhood education and special education which must be bridged in order that teachers may be prepared for the integration of young handicapped children into regular classes. Some special educators feel they must narrow the focus of their curricula on remedial, rehabilitative, or therapeutic activities. Early childhood educators are uncomfortable with the preponderance of structure, specificity, and teacher mediation that is practiced in some special education classes. They believe that these practices neglect young children's developmental needs and the "whole child" approach that is an integral part of most early childhood curricula. Many early childhood educators view special education practices as antithetical to the concepts of the importance of free play, self-initiated activities, and learning in the context of play situations (Shapiro, 1979).

Shapiro (1979) suggested that it is possible to reconcile the two ideologies, stating that:

> Education is made "special".....by the

> attempt or ability of teachers to modify usual teaching and learning processes to match the specialized needs of their children. Instead of restricting a child's experience, special techniques can be used to promote a child's growth and ability to learn from the environment. A special early childhood program can be both developmentally based and humanistic in its approach and application, but it is most important that the early childhood curriculum be modified, taking into consideration the characteristics of young children with special needs who are different from those developing normally (p. 40).

The teacher must be familiar with some characteristics of children with special needs in order to make appropriate curriculum modifications. Some of these characteristics demand greater teacher mediation than in ordinary classrooms; as well as a conscious structuring and restructuring of materials, time, and space (Shapiro, 1979).

Children with special needs often have uneven developmental profiles which necessitate the creation and presentation of activities which will encourage them to use their strengths to develop weaker areas. There are special techniques and approaches found in special education programs that might help teachers develop enabling environments for these children. Task analysis is an action that is alien to most early childhood programs, because it leads to fragmentation of a program. This analysis, however, can be used at times to direct the handicapped child step by step through appropriate early childhood

experiences (Shapiro, 1979).

Many ordinary abilities which are acquired quickly by most normally developing children often take longer and require more effort on the part of the child with special needs. Early childhood educators feel that the provision of appropriate animate and inanimate environments is sufficient to promote learning in the normal child. They perceive direct practice, rote drill, and rote learning activities as an intellectually destructive teaching mode. For special needs children, however, the rationale for providing practice of quite elementary and fragmented activities is that certain children do not learn during the usual daily activities as do children without learning handicaps. Special education teachers are cognizant of the importance of equipping those special needs children with as many automatic, useful behaviors as possible, to release their energies for other learning experiences (Shapiro, 1979).

Shapiro (1979) expressed confidence that a special early childhood curriculum can be one that recognizes the developmental needs of young children across all physical and psychological dimensions of growth. The focus on cognitive skills, while disregarding the child's social and emotional needs, would not be beneficial for any child. Whether disabled or not, young children must have a variety of experiences within a suitable environment. Specialized

aspects of a curriculum can and should be incoporated when developmentally appropriate for young children, whatever their needs. So far, no procedures have been developed which are effective for all children with handicaps. Therefore it is incumbent upon teachers to apply a rationally based, flexible, eclectic approach to each child's individual problem. This will necessitate the early childhood teacher in an integrated classroom to be knowledgeable about various procedures which diverge from those which have been a part of the usual early childhood teacher preparation program.

Attitudes of Teachers

It is not uncommon that regular teachers feel insecure with handicapped children and have prejudices and false ideas about them, but it is imperative that the teacher accepts the handicapped students. According to Rauer (1979), "Teacher attitudes will shape every parameter of the emotional and social climate of a program" (p. 24). Turnbull and Schultz (1979) state:

> It has been documented over and over again that the teacher's view of the student is a strong force in determining the nature of the interaction between the teacher and the student and in turn, the student's achievement.....The teacher constantly communicates important messages to students about his attitudes toward individual

> differences. It becomes obvious to all students whether the teacher favours the higher achieving students; feels respect, pity, or disgust for students who have special problems; believes that every person has inherent value; or is prejudiced against people who are different. Teachers generally are far more transparent than they would like to believe. Both in verbal and nonverbal ways, a teacher's behavior can substantially affect the manner in which the nonhandicapped peers view the handicapped student (p. 340).

In most of the research, a consistent finding is that regular teachers prefer special class placement rather than integration of mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, and learning disabled children. Moore and Fine (1978) found that teachers were more supportive of integration for learning disabled than for mentally retarded children. MacMillan, Meyers, and Yoshida (1978) reported that even when mentally retarded children are being mainstreamed in regular classes, teachers perceive them to be considerably below the class average in both social acceptance and academic achievement (Johnson & Cartwright, 1979).

Gottlieb (1975) examined teachers' perceptions of integrated mentally retarded children. He reported that their social status was related to teachers' perceptions of their lack of competence and misbehavior. Educable mentally retarded children who were perceived by their teachers as misbehaving were rejected by their nonretarded classmates,

and EMR children who were perceived by their teachers as academically incompetent were not highly accepted by their nonretarded classmates.

In fact, teachers' perceptions of EMR children's behavior accounted for more variance in the pupils' social status among their peers than the perceptions of the peers themselves (Ellis, 1978). When other children determine that the teacher maintains different standards for acceptable behavior (either academically or socially) for one child, they may also judge the child by different standards. The nonhandicapped children may either reject the handicapped child or offer the child sympathy; neither reaction is likely to enhance the handicapped child's self image (Gottlieb, 1980).

## Attitudes of Administrators

Teachers alone do not have the resources necessary to maintain integrated services successfully. They must therefore receive the encouragement and support of administrators. Administrators should be prepared to guarantee the financial support necessary to assure quality education to every child and to offer moral support to the teaching staff. If administrators do not believe in the value of integrated education, it will be extremely difficult to succeed in integrating the handicapped students

in the regular school system (Robichaud & Enns, 1980).

O'Donnell and Bradfield (1976) found that in California where inservice training for integration was provided, it was directed almost exlusively at direct instructional personnel, that is, teachers and teacher-aides. Few districts provided staff development for principals. The administrators expressed concern that they needed help in planning more adequate inservice training. They reflected a need for more detailed and comprehensive training regarding the changed role for both teaching and administrative personnel in the mainstreaming transition.

Attitudes of Students

If the nonhandicapped students are not prepared to receive and to work with handicapped students, the handicapped students may be in worse condition in the regular class than previously in the special class or in some other form of segregated service (Robichaud & Enns, 1980). Research studies to date show that handicapped children are not readily accepted socially by their nonhandicapped peers (Goodman, Gottlieb & Harrison, 1972; Gottieb & Budoff, 1973; Iano, Ayers, Heller, McGettigan & Walker, 1974).

Most of the research on the social acceptance of handicapped children in integrated settings has focused on

the mentally retarded and most of the findings are derived from the perceptions of others, particularly nonhandicapped peers. The results have failed to support the commonly held belief that placing educable mentally retarded children in the mainstream promotes their acceptance. In fact, the less they were exposed to nonretarded peers, the more positive were the attitudes of the nonretarded peers toward the handicapped children (Ellis, 1978). Goodman, Gottlieb, and Harrison (1972) conducted a study using three groups of children (nonEMR children, EMR children who were integrated into the academic routine of non-graded school, and EMR children who remained segregated in the school's only self-contained class). The purpose of the study was to investigate the social acceptance of EMR children as it might relate to the age of their placement and the gender of the nonEMR children. It was hypothesized that the non-graded school should enhance the social acceptability of the EMR children. They were in a home room with their age mates enabling nonretarded children to interact maximally with them. The results indicated that both integrated and segregated EMR students were rejected significantly more often than nonEMR children, and that integrated EMR children were rejected significantly more often than segregated ones by males but not by females. The findings were consistent with other reports (see Johnson & Kirk, 1950), that EMR

children were not socially accepted by nonEMR children, even when every attempt was made to integrate the EMR children. They suggest that EMR children are rejected primarily because of their behavioral problems rather than their academic limitations.

Leavitt and Cohen (1976) described a study done by Billings (1963) in which he investigated attitudes to physically handicapped children. The subjects in the study were asked to complete two stories, one dealing with a normal child and the second with a physically handicapped child. On the basis of a content analysis, the investigator found that nonhandicapped children displayed less favorable attitudes toward the physically handicapped than to nonhandicapped children and that the attitude of older subjects was less favourable than that of younger ones.

A study by Rapier, Adelson, Carey and Croke (1972) indicated that unlike the mentally retarded, exposure to physically handicapped children can result in improved attitudes by their nonhandicapped peers. Prior to the integration of orthopedically handicapped children into an upper elementary class, children were asked to rate the physically handicapped on a scale based on a sematic differential technique. The scale was administered again at the end of the year. The authors concluded that nonhandicapped children can develop a more positive

perception of the orthopedically handicapped as a result of an integrated school experience (Levitt & Cohen, 1976).

According to Kennedy and Bruininks (1974), the few reported sociometric studies of hearing impaired children revealed that they were not as socially accepted as their normally hearing peers in regular classroom settings. They cited studies by Justman and Maskowitz (1957) and Elser (1959) which reflected these findings. However, these studies indicated that the hearing impaired children seemed to occupy a position of neutrality rather than overt rejection. These studies used older children (ages 9 to 17 years) and they did not indicate whether the subjects experienced structured preschool education, opportunities for social experience with hearing peers, and the benefits of early diagnosis and amplification.

The purpose of Kennedy and Bruininks' (1974) study was to assess the peer status and self perceived peer status of first and second grade hearing impaired and normally hearing children enrolled in regular classrooms. Unlike the previous studies, all of the children with hearing handicaps had been provided with special preschool services which included extensive language and auditory training and parent consultation. All children had also been enrolled three or more mornings per week with normally hearing children in nursery schools. At the time of the study, all subjects

were receiving one hour of daily supplementary tutoring and twenty minutes speech therapy two or three times a week. Results of three different sociometric tests indicated that the hearing handicapped were more socially accepted than were normally hearing children. Plausible reasons suggested were: (a) the hearing handicapped children possessed socially desirable traits and personal competencies necessary for school success, (b) the classroom settings may have been optimal for fostering the social interaction of handicapped children, (c) young children are more nurturant than older children toward hearing impaired children, and/or (d) aspects of the preschool program may have enhanced the social acceptability of the children compared to the level of social acceptance reported for hearing impaired children in earlier studies.

Few studies have examined the social and play behavior of handicapped and nonhandicapped children in integrated settings. Porter, Ramsey, Tremblay, Iaceobo, and Crawley (1978) observed the social behavior of retarded and normally functioning children during free play in an integrated preschool. They examined two general classes of behavior: (1) the interpersonal distance between the retarded and nonretarded children, and (2) social preference of and interaction between the two groups. They found that normally developing children maintained a closer proximity

to other normally developing children than to the retarded children and that they revealed a consistent preference for normally developing children. In a second study, Devoney, Guralnick, and Rubin (1974) evaluated the effects of integrating handicapped and nonhandicapped preschool children on social play skills. The researchers noted few spontaneous social interactions. Not until the teacher systematically structured the situation, using nonhandicapped children to promote various interactions, did marked increases in social interactions and quality of play occur. However, Hawkins and Peterson (1977) found little discrimination by nonhandicapped children toward their nonhandicapped peers. Nevertheless, the available evidence suggests that teachers cannot assume that positive peer interactions will occur in integrated settings and that specialized procedures to encourage and support such interactions are needed (Katz, 1979).

Attitudes of Parents

It is imperative that a majority of parents of both handicapped and nonhandicapped children accept and support integration. Jarman and Das (1979) voiced the concern of many parents and parent organizations who are apprehensive about their children being ignored in the name of normalization. Many parents have worked long and hard to get specialized services for their children, usually in a

self-contained special education setting. Some may see integration as a step backwards in the delivery of services. They must be involved early. Likewise, some parents of nonhandicapped children are apprehensive about integration. Some have expressed concern that their children may be deprived of financial resources and teacher attention once handicapped children begin to be served in an integrated setting (Brady, 1979). Their fears must be allayed and their understanding and support gained. Integration of handicapped children into a regular classroom will depend greatly on the peer group. Their acceptance, in turn, can be aided by parent knowledge about, and the ability to answer, specific questions regarding those children who may not fit easily into a regular classroom (McIntosh, 1979).

## PREPARING TEACHERS FOR AN INTEGRATED CLASSROOM

Throughout the literature on integration of handicapped children, the importance of the role of the teacher was stressed. The CELDIC Report stated:

> Our committee is convinced that the classroom teacher is the pivot, the core, the heart of the educational system. We believe there is no hope for children with emotional and learning disorders unless this is recognized and all the resoures of the school system

> and of the community are martialled to support and assist the teacher to meet the individual needs of each child in his care.....Everywhere we went we were discouraged by how inadequately trained most teachers felt themselves to be.....(p.130)
>
> When, during our field visits, those interviewed were asked to list areas that must be reassessed if schools were to be more successful in diagnosing and overcoming the learning and emotional problems of children, they invariably mentioned near the top of the list the need for changes in teacher education or teacher training. (p. 82)

McIntosh (1979) concurs:

> .....(most) important, there must be a well developed plan for teacher education in all aspects of mainstreaming.....This cannot be merely at the inservice level or one-time function. (p. 57)

Perhaps because of the practice in the past several years of partial or total segregation of handicapped training of regular teachers has done little to help them recognize, understand, and work with individual differences in children...." (CELDIC Report, 1970, p. 131). The Report goes on to say that the Committee found specific criticism continually voiced of the inadequacy in training programs in regard to child development, individual differences, cultural differences, and emotional and learning disorders. In particular, it deplored the ignorance of many teachers about the characteristics, causes, and treatment of learning and adjustment difficulties. Another serious ommission has

been in preparation for those aspects of the teacher's role which has to do with other people, especially other professional workers and parents.

> The teacher has a multiplicity of roles to play; to plan, organize, experiment, encourage inquiry and feedback; to involve, help, care and stimulate; to equalize opportunity; to diagnose and compensate for the handicap; to provide avenues for creativity; to allow work and play to be complimentary and to let the child be a child. (CELDIC Report, 1970, p. 125).

The CELDIC Report (1970) made specific recommendations as to what should be included in training programs which would prepare teachers to deal with children with special needs:

> #23 that teacher training institutions redesign their curricula to include courses and practical experience to increase the teacher's understanding of:
>
> - individual differences
> - the affective life of the child
> - the meaning of social institutions - the family, school, community, in the life of the child
> - the characteristics, causes, and treatment of emotional and learning disorders, group processes, and the role of the teacher as a person in the group.
>
> #24 that teacher training institutions and school systems experiment and develop improved methods of providing practical experiences for teachers in training. (p. 150).

McIntosh stated:

> Regular teachers need indepth work in such areas as (1) the mainstreaming model; (2) an introduction to exceptional children with special emphasis on the characteristics of the mentally retarded, behaviorally disordered, and learning disabled; (3) screening and observation skills; (4) classroom and specialized diagnostic processes, and (5) classroom remediation techniques. (pp. 55, 56).

Hutton (1980) stated that a general criticism of teacher training is that it is too theoretical, overly dominated by content, and significantly sparse in methods and practical training. He stated that no effort is made to expose teachers to exceptional children during training. He felt that there would be merit in having teacher trainees work with handicapped children as aides as part of the first year practicum.

Little (1979) conducted a survey in Nova Scotia of special education teachers to determine what skills and knowledge they believed they needed in order to be effective in their work. They had expressed dissatisfaction with what was available to them in gaining the skills basic to meeting the needs of exceptional children. The results of the survey indicated a need for specific courses, or specific information in existing courses, related to the following:

- the role of the resource teacher, itinerant personnel
- specialized teaching techniques and programs for learning assistance

- remedial materials selection, preparation, and evaluation
- learning assistance/learning disabilities practicum
- time management and record keeping;
- techniques for evaluating program effectiveness.

In her doctoral thesis "Integration of Handicapped Children in Alberta Preschools: Examining the Dimensions" (1983), Barros listed specific content areas for inclusion in teacher training programs as indicated by preschool teachers. They included (1) problems of handicapped children; (2) discipline and behavior modification; (3) testing for prescriptive program development; (4) observation; (5) teaching strategies with special needs children; (6) goal setting.

According to Mori (1979), the teacher must be able to employ a variety of instructional methods in order to increase the likelihood of securing a "match" with the individual student's needs. The teacher must be able to select an instructional methodology which is consistent and compatible with the student's profile of strengths and deficits as well as the unique learning style. He saw individualized instruction as the most direct way of doing this. Robichaud and Enns (1980) concur.

Several sources stressed the importance of the teacher being aware of the characteristics, causes, and treatments

of emotional and learning disorders or handicapping conditions (CELDIC Report, 1970; McIntosh, 1979; Brady, 1979; Harlow, 1979). When dealing with physical and sensory conditions or severe mental retardation, producing a reliable prognosis presents no problem, but when determining mild retardation, emotional maladjustment, or learning disabilities, valid and reliable measures are more difficult. Personal judgement of a professional is often the critical element in the identification of the handicap (Harlow, 1979).

The teacher must also understand the situational nature of a handicap; that is, a person is restricted in meeting the demands of a certain situation but is not handicapped in others. The orthopedically handicapped child, for instance, will face obvious difficulties in situations demanding mobility, but this should have little effect upon the capacity to handle conceptual learning. Too often a handicap is treated as a whole condition pervading the entire life of the person, and the person with a handicap becomes a handicapped person. A child is no longer an individual endowed with uniqueness, but instead becomes a member of a handicapped category. The teacher must be able to recognize the child's limitations without losing sight of other qualities or the label may replace the child. With this, an insidious phenomenon occurs: difference (which the

label denotes) becomes equated with inferiority. There is a tendency then to modify the schoolroom setting to accomodate the handicapped children to a point where we not only call attention to the handicap, but "pad" the school world. Too carefully delineating what a child can handle may place the child in an unrealistic world. One characteristic of such a world is that success should be guaranteed to the handicapped child. Success is very important in learning, but if handicapped children are assured success because they are exposed only to those situations, they will become dependent on that environment. We expect perseverence from nonhandicapped children, even when achievement is not always evident. Handicapped children may have the environment modified to the extent that they have little practice with independent learning (Harlow, 1979).

Harlow goes on to say that handicapped children have more than an adversity with which to deal. At first appearance, the handicap can draw attention. Next, the child's uniqueness can be displaced by the handicap. As well, they are treated in a way quite different from their nonhandicapped peers in that they may have an aide, speech therapist, and so forth. This may underscore and reinforce the difference. Then, if they are given only tasks they can readily handle and are thus spared from uncertain or unpleasant learning events, they will become less able to

handle the uncertainty and frustration that is intrinsic to much learning and functioning. They may become subtly convinced that they cannot handle what would ordinarily be expected of them, this becomes internalized, and the handicap becomes a disability.

> If all these besetting circumstances are permitted to become chronic and valid over all other situations, there will be a continuation of lower self-expectations, and the padded school environment that insulates the child from potential growth will render the child handicapped in a total way. The child is by attitude and orientation less and less able to handle the requirements of life. In a word, the child has become an invalid. (Harlow, 1979, p. 32).

The teacher who has never had any association with handicapped children may have false perceptions, negative or positive. The handicapped child is a child first and a handicapped person second. Not all handicapped children are beguiling any more than are nonhandicapped children. It is often assumed the handicapped person has feelings that are "just like everybody else's", but handicapped people often do not feel like everyone else. They may have chronic anger or resentment, may feel they are avoided by others, or dealt with unfairly. These are real feelings not always understood or even apparent to others who do not experience their frustration (Brady, 1979). Exposure to handicapped children during the course of teacher education would give

the prospective teacher some insight into the world of the handicapped child.

The Report of the Early Childhood Services' Task Force on Teacher Competence (1976) summarized the teacher competencies deemed necessary in fulfilling the goals of the early childhood programs in Alberta. The study was concentrated primarily on programs for five to six year old children. Findings and recommendations were arrived at as a result of a province-wide interview survey of 331 teachers and coordinators in early childhood programs, as well as parents of children in those programs.

Most of the respondents in the survey favored the integration of children with handicaps into regular programs. However, there was opposition from two sources.

> Both teachers and parents of children with handicaps who are presently in segregated programs had reservations about the abilities of teachers in normal programs to meet the needs of the handicapped child. The teachers of the children placed the highest priority on their ability to observe and interpret child behavior and development. (p. 7).

The Report made recommendations regarding teacher competencies necessary for all early childhood programs as well as those specific to teacher competence in the integration of children with handicaps into regular

programs. According to the Task Force Report, the response of the majority of teachers and coordinators indicated that the most essential competence for early childhood teachers is interpersonal competence, primarily communication and leadership skills. "The ability to relate well - to children and adults - was seen to be the single most important aspect of early childhood teachers' competence....."(p. 33). This is also the area where these teachers and coordinators felt they were the least prepared. "Provision for the development of that ability should be made essential to training" (p. 32).

The teachers deemed to have the most successful programs were those who were concerned with growth rather than compensating for deficiencies, and, therefore, they used a diagnostic approach. In order to diagnose the needs of any child, and the handicapped child in particular, the teacher must have a thorough understanding of child development.

> 6.1 Teachers must be skilled in observational techniques, have a sound understanding of normal development and learning and be able to recognize indications of physical and emotional distress among children....An awareness and accomodation of individual differences is especially important among teachers who work with handicapped children in their programs. (p. 20).

It is essential that teachers with handicapped children

in their programs have some knowledge of the various handicapping conditions as they pertain to learning, programs, and physical arrangement of the classroom.

> They must understand the nature of the child's handicap and how it interferes with learning.....Besides diagnostic skills, teachers should have the ability to plan and implement an appropriate sequential program for the handicapped child. Furthermore, it may be necessary for them to organize the physical environment in a way that is functional for the handicapped child. (p. 20).

The development of observation skills is essential to any early childhood teacher, but it is crucial to a teacher in an integrated classroom. The Task Force Report states:

> Some of the most effective teachers we saw demonstrated often their ability to observe children, to understand the significance of what they saw and to "use" their observations in planning for the child's activities. They were accurate in charting the children's progress and keen to spot difficulties children might be having. Characteristically their observations were objective, made in terms of the child's progress rather than with reference to external criteria or their own personal values. (p. 33).

The teacher of handicapped children must have a knowledge of support services and the interpersonal skills to communicate and work with the personnel concerned.

> While teachers require the knowledge and skills to identify special needs and to

> implement appropriate programs they are not themselves specialists and cannot provide for unusual needs without resources and consultation. (Task Force Report, 1976, p. 13).

> It is especially important that teachers be aware of the resources for handicapped children - and to be able to work with other professionals to develop programs for these children. (Task Force Report, 1976, p. 33).

Support services include parents as well as aides or assistants who may be present in the program. The teacher must also be able to work with them. The Task Force Report emphasized that the teacher serves as a leader, not as an authority, and as a leader should be able, in consultation with parents and others working in the program, to formulate the goals of the program and to provide a model and a direction for others involved in realizing those goals.

The Task Force Report (1976) stressed that "Theoretical considerations and 'content' knowledge in training programs should be integrated with a solid 'practical activity' component" (p. 31). Only in this way can the student teacher develop skills with supervision which provide feedback, information, and support to the student's learning. The skills outlined in the report can be learned only in situations where the student can observe, question, plan, experiment, and reflect upon the behavior of children, other adults, and themselves. "Such experiential learning is crucial for the development of personal attitudes and

interpersonal skills which are considered essential aspects of the early childhood teacher's competence" (P. 31). This has implications for an extended practicum because student teachers need to have a great deal of direct contact with young children in general and handicapped young children in particular, and to be guided into making perceptive and useful observations of them. "Only with such information can they proceed to develop their programs" (p. 32).

In 1978 the Alberta Association for Children with Learning Disabilities approached the Senate of the University of Alberta with the request that the university move to improve the expertise of those professionals working with the learning disabled. The report of the task force resulting from this meeting was published in April, 1979. This Report of the Task Force on Children and Others with Learning Disabilities made the following recommendation in regard to teacher education:

> Recommendation 6-5
> It is therefore recommended that faculties or schools of Education.....develop programs which will ensure that all of their graduates have a basic knowledge of:
> - normal child development
> - the identifying characteristics of learning disabilities and associated behaviors
> - the use of observation methods and informal diagnostic procedures

- the referral and remediation systems available
- communication skills, especially with children and their families (p.40).

The Task Force on Integration of Handicapped School-Age Children into Regular Classes was struck by the Provincial Executive Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association in September, 1980. The report was issued in January, 1981. The report recommends that the content of the course should include the following:

- a survey of the characteristics of the various handicaps as well as assessment techniques;
- planning individualized instructional programs;
- teaching strategies for program implementation;
- the evaluation and updating of programs. (p. 4).

In Scratching the Surface: A Report on Legal Issues Concerning Disabled Persons (1981) the opinion was stated that if many of the skillstermed special which are given to special education teachers should be included in the repetoire of the regular classroom teacher, mildly disabled children would never need to be categorized and referred for special education. They referred in particular to individualizing instruction and adapting instructional strategies to meet the needs of individual children. They felt that special education was not that much different from regular education, with a few exceptions. "This being the

case an adequately prepared regular teacher can do a remarkably effective job of teaching traditionally exceptional children, especially when able consultants are available on demand" (p. 251). The report stated:

> Curriculum programs for persons with disabilities are only as good as the people who are charged with implementing them. Having a staff of the quality to deliver the service should be a prerequisite to, or at least a concomitant of the provision of the service. The continuous growth and improvement of educational processes and programs in the schools are contingent upon the competencies of the teachers. The really important changes will only come about as teachers change. (p. 262).

Standards for Education of Exceptional Children in Canada (the SEECC Report, 1979), was concerned with preparing teachers of exceptional children. While the terms of reference did not include the whole area of teacher education, the members of the committee felt that because similarities have as much significance as individual differences, implications for professional preparation of teachers of both exceptional and normal children is for a more integrated approach with common ground in the basic preparation. The report contended that all teachers must first have a firm basic knowledge and experience with the psychology and development of normal children. Then it is equally important that the lessons learned in the clinic and

special classrooms be available to regular classroom teachers, since every regular class teacher can expect to be confronted with at least one or two children with special needs. All teachers need to develop the ability to diagnose the reasons why a child is failing in the task at hand, and how, in the light of that diagnosis, to modify teaching techniques in order to achieve the objective or an amended objective.

The SEECC Report presented a three stage model for educating teachers of exceptional children. Stage one, which would generally extend over two years, would contain elements which should be shared by all teachers, whether preparing for work with exceptional children or not. Stages two and three would be for those teachers wishing to specialize in the area of exceptional children (Diagrams 1 & 2).

Stage one is particularly relevant to this study. It would be at this stage that contact and experience with normal children would be established, and during which the opportunity would be afforded for guided and interpreted observation of a variety of exceptionalities. At the same time, educational psychology classes would explore the factors underlying children's learning; why some children fail to learn, and what the teacher can, alone or with others, do about it. It is important at this time that

DIAGRAM 1

**PREPARATION FOR TEACHERS OF EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN**

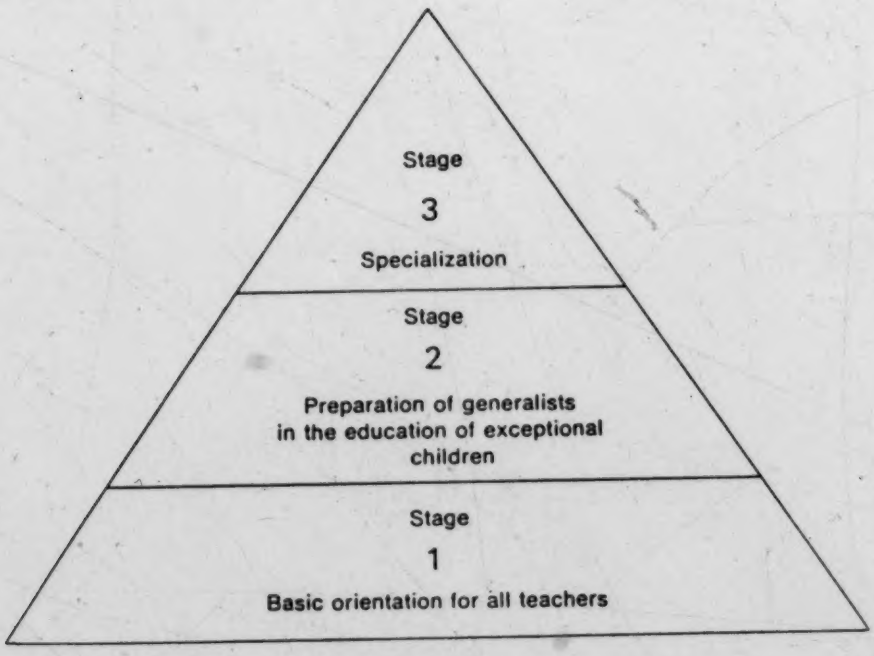
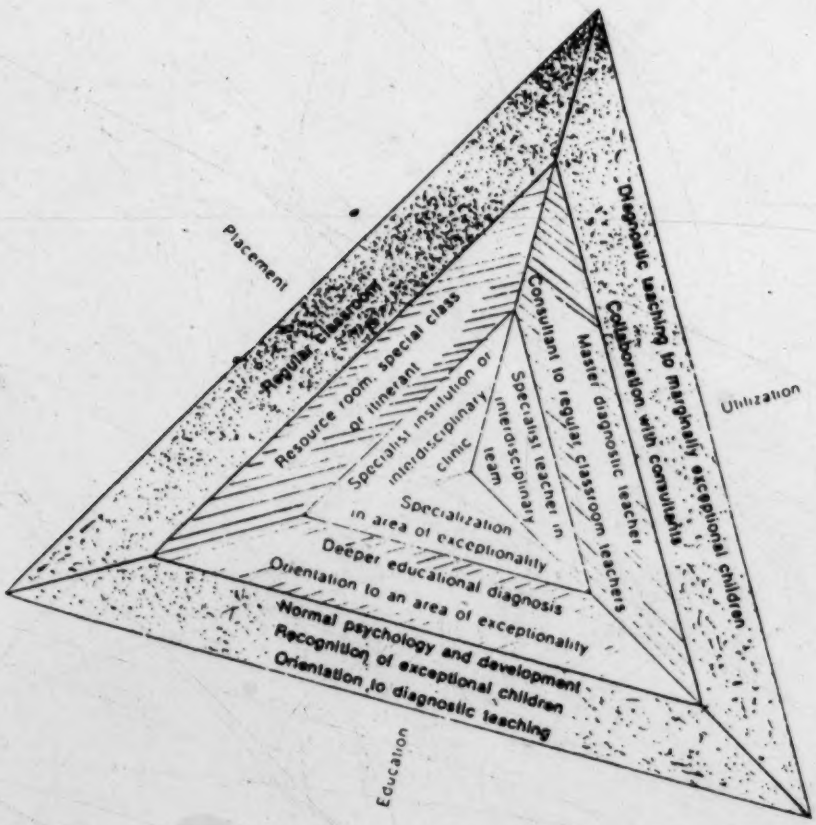


DIAGRAM 2

UTILIZATION OF TEACHERS OF EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN




Stage 1

Stage 2

Stage 3

there be a provision of practical experiences to help all teachers understand and help children with learning disorders, and marginal disorders, in the regular classroom. A teacher having gone through the first stage of this program would be equipped to render "first aid", that is, to use diagnostic tests where appropriate, implement corrective programs in basic skill subjects, and to recognize children with problems likely to require additional services.

The SEECC Report emphasized that if faculties of education are concerned with their programs and the products of such programs, then they must be prepared to implement research into these programs. Of paramount importance is research on the practical experience aspect in order to improve the clinical preparation of teachers. As of now, this is the area which appears to be plagued by diverse practices and failure. At the same time, it holds the greatest promise for major break-throughs to higher quality personnel.

According to the Canadian Teachers' Federation Discussion Paper on The Integration of Children with Special Needs (1981), teachers of integrated classes require abilities to work in the following areas:

Curriculum and instruction:
- adapting instructional modes to special needs children;

- English as a second language;
- French as a second language;
- use of audio-visual materials;
- arts and creativity for special needs students;
- physical education for special needs students;
- developing and implementing remediation strategies;
- preparing personalized programs.

Assessment:
- Ability to identify learning difficulties;
- measurement and evaluation (understanding the purposes of available tests, interpreting test results);

Administration:
- understanding the roles of members in the support network;
- working with the support team;
- counselling and working with parents;
- understanding relevant provincial legislation.

## SUMMARY

Integration of handicapped children into regular classes has benefits for both handicapped and nonhandicapped children. However, there are many practical problems to be faced if the integration movement is to be successful.

There is concern among researchers that integration is being implemented without adequate examination of the conditions necessary for success. Misconceptions about integration must be cleared up, underlying political issues

should be resolved, and attitudes of all those involved in the integration process must be positive.

It is generally agreed that the classroom teacher is the single most important ingredient in the integration "formula". It is also generally agreed that teachers of regular classes are not adequately prepared by present teacher education programs to deal with children who have special needs. Early childhood is the obvious place to begin integration so it is particularly important that teachers at this level be prepared for these children.

Programs for children with disabilities will be only as good as the people who are charged with administering them. Having qualified staff must be at least a concomitant of the provision of the service.

# CHAPTER III

## DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Information to be used as the basis of recommendations for future directions for teacher preparation programs was gained from kindergarten, grade one, and special education teachers in a large urban school district and a rural district. A questionnaire with some follow-up interviews was the method used to obtain this information. As well, interviews were conducted with several other educators in various capacities. This chapter describes the choice of sample, the scope of the teacher questionnaire and interviews, the procedure for distributing the questionnaire and conducting the interviews, and procedures for examining the data collected. The basic components of the Special Education and Early Childhood Education programs which were in place at the University of Alberta at the time of the study are included as part of the framework for analysing the data.

## PILOT STUDY

The teacher questionnaire was designed to be relatively non-directive to assure that respondents would not be

channelled into pre-conceived responses. The questionnaire was first read by two persons in the Faculty of Education to confirm relevance and clarity of questions. The purpose of the pilot study was twofold: (1) to determine whether respondents would interpret questions as intended, and (2) to receive suggestions as to revisions, extensions, or deletions which might add to the clarity and pertinence of the study.

Four teachers in the County of Lacombe were selected based on the recommendations of the Director of Special Education in that district. All four teachers had special needs children in their classrooms at that time. All had over five years' experience and none had taken special education courses.

Interviews were conducted with the teachers immediately following completion of the questionnaire.

## MAIN STUDY

### Present Programs (Early Childhood Education and Special Education)

All teachers who took part in this study were in the Early Childhood Education and Special Education programs which were in place prior to the fall of 1983. Therefore, these are the programs which will be described and which are

included in Appendix C.

Basically students in Early Childhood Education and Special Education followed the same pattern (Appendix C). The differences lie mainly in the area of specialization. Early Childhood Education chose two full course equivalents in Early Childhood Education and three full course equivalents from three other areas, such as Art, Drama, Library Science, English, Music, Family, or Movement. Special Education students took eight half-course equivalents in special education and also three full course equivalents from only one subject area. Special Education students were allowed only one free option as compared to two free options for ECE majors.

Sample for Questionnaire

It was initially decided to distribute questionnaires to one hundred Early Childhood and Special Education teachers in Edmonton Public Schools. However, as a result of the interviews conducted during the pilot study it was decided that teachers from a rural school district should be included in the sample. Teachers working in rural areas often have reduced accessibility to resources as well as a lack of alternative classes for handicapped children. These factors could influence the nature of their responses as compared to teachers in a large urban district.

Since the integration of handicapped children is most likely to take place in the early years kindergarten and grade one teachers were selected for the study. Special Education teachers were included in the sample because it was assumed they could provide valuable input regarding the type of course work needed to develop the skills and knowledge necessary when working with special needs children.

The Edmonton Public School District and the County of Parkland granted permission to distribute the questionnaires to their teachers. The Edmonton Separate School District declined on the grounds that kindergarten and grade one teachers had recently been involved in two major studies and an additional research project might create an overload.

One hundred questionnaires were distributed to teachers in the city of Edmonton. These were divided equally between early childhood and special education teachers. Forty questionnaires were distributed to kindergarten and grade one teachers in the County of Parkland.

Sample for Interviews

Ten percent of the respondents to the questionnaire were selected for follow-up interviews. As well, professionals in various teaching or administrative roles related to early childhood and/or special education were interviewed regarding the skills and knowledge they deemed

necessary for teachers to possess in order to successfully teach in an integrated classroom.

Sample for Classroom Observation

Teachers had indicated on the questionnaire whether or not they would be willing to allow observation in their classrooms. The objective was to familiarize the author with programs involving children with various handicapping conditions. On that basis, five primary special education classes, two integrated kindergarten classes, and three integrated grade one classes were selected.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to obtain the following information: (1) the educational background and experience of kindergarten, grade one, and special education teachers; (2) the number of special needs children in their classrooms; (3) the nature of the handicap or special need; (4) the types of course work each teacher found useful in terms of teaching special needs children; and (5) the skills and knowledge they felt they were lacking, but need in order to deal effectively with these children. A non-directive format was developed for the questionnaire to assure that respondents would not be channelled into pre-conceived responses. (Appendix A)

Interviews

The purpose of the teacher interview was to elicit more in-depth information than might be gleaned from the questionnaire. Subjects were asked to enlarge upon responses to questions regarding (1) course work and (2) skills and knowledge (see questions 2 and 3 in Appendix A). The other professionals interviewed were asked to give their views of the skills and knowledge needed by early childhood teachers in order to work effectively with special needs children in regular classrooms.

## PROCEDURE FOR THE STUDY

The Questionnaire

Since one of the main purposes of the study was to find out what university course work teachers judged to be helpful in teaching young children with special needs, it was deemed desirable to include in the sample teachers with backgrounds in both Early Childhood Education and Special Education. This presented a problem since most teachers with Special Education training would presumably work in special classes rather than in regular classrooms. In order to ensure some input from these teachers, two questionnaires were sent to each of twenty five schools in Edmonton which

had special classes at the appropriate level. These schools had been identified in a list forwarded by the research officer at the Edmonton Public School Board Office. An equal number were sent to schools chosen at random from a list of elementary schools supplied by the Edmonton Public School District. In all cases the questionnaires were sent to the principal of each school with the request that they be distributed to kindergarten and/or grade one teachers in that school or, in the case of special education teachers, to the appropriate level. Forty questionnaires were forwarded to the Early Childhood Services Consultant for the County of Parkland who distributed them to kindergarten and grade one teachers in that district.

The first section of the questionnaire dealt with teacher qualifications and experience (Appendix A). This section was expected to bring forth peripheral information which might be useful in (1) identifying universitites with integrated early childhood-special education teacher preparation programs; (2) determining the incidence of upgrading to ameliorate perceived deficiencies in basic teacher preparation programs; (3) determining whether teachers were teaching in the area for which they were prepared at university; (4) identifying differences, if any, in responses from teachers with little experience and those with over five years' experience.

It was anticipated that the information regarding universities might identify program components which could be used in the recommendations for teacher preparation programs in Alberta. Information concerning the incidence of upgrading and the movement of teachers to areas other than that for which they were originally prepared would be used in making recommendations regarding in-service or continuing education courses for teachers in the field. A difference between responses from teachers with little experience and those with over five years could have implications for alternative practicum experiences or internships within a teacher education program.

The first question on the questionnaire asked teachers to give the number of handicapped children in their classrooms and to identify the type(s) of handicap involved. Utilizing the literature and in consultation with a professor working in the area of special education, the categories of exceptionality had been defined. As questionnaires were returned, this information was transferred to computer sheets.

Question two related to university course work which had proven useful in teaching (1) young children, (2) special needs children, and (3) young children with special needs. Each response was recorded. When the list was complete, responses were grouped according to course

content. Two teachers in the field were invited to examine the groupings and make suggested changes. Broad content categories were drawn in collaboration with a colleague and verified by a faculty member in Early Childhood Education.

Question three focused on the skills and knowledge needed by teachers to work with special needs children, but which may have been lacking in the university programs. Responses were listed and grouped accordingly. For the sake of brevity, similar or related skills and knowledge were combined to form categories.

Information garnered from questions one, two, and three was prepared for analysis by computer.

Classroom Observations

Teachers were asked to indicate on the questionnaire whether they would be willing to allow observation in their classrooms at a scheduled time. The purpose of the observation was to familiarize the researcher with special education methods and equipment and to observe special needs children in regular classroom settings. Of particular interest were programs, physical arrangement of classrooms, and student interaction. Observations took place in five primary special education classrooms, two integrated kindergarten classes, and three integrated grade one classes.

Observations were recorded and discussed with the teachers concerned. The information gained was used only indirectly in this study. It gave the author some insight into skills and knowledge required by teachers of special needs children.

Interviews

Teachers were asked to indicate on the questionnaire whether or not they would be willing to be interviewed for further information. Questionnaires with positive responses were numbered applying a table of random numbers, and 10% of the respondents were selected for follow-up interviews. The main purpose of these interviews was to allow teachers to expand upon information given on the questionnaire. Comprehensive notes were taken during the interviews. The information received was recorded in the categories already established for questions two and three on the questionnaire. It was then included in the computer analysis.

The second set of interviews was conducted with professionals in teaching or supervisory capacities in the fields of Early Childhood Education, Special Education, and Family Studies. Included were the Director of Early Childhood Education at the University of Calgary, two professors in the Department of Educational Psychology at

the University of Alberta, a professor in Family Studies at the University of Manitoba, the Coordinator of Program Approval for Early Childhood Services, the Director of Staff Training for Integrated Preschool Programs at the University of Alberta, two district co-ordinators of Early Childhood Services, the Director of Special Education with the County of Lacombe, and the Program Teacher for Calgary Board of Education. Interviewees were contacted by telephone at which time they were briefed on the nature of the study and their input. They were asked to give their perceptions, from the vantage point of each one's professional capacity, of the skills and knowledge required by an early childhood teacher in order to deal effectively with special needs children in a regular classroom setting. Notes were taken and all the interviews were taped for further verification.

Information received as a result of these interviews was combined and summarized under ten broad headings. They were used in making recommendations for components of a teacher preparation program.

## SUMMARY

The instruments and procedures described in this chapter were designed to gather information on an appropriate teacher education program for classroom teachers of exceptional children. Information from questionnaires

and interviews was transferred to computer sheets for tabulation and analysis.

# CHAPTER IV

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In this chapter the findings of the questionnaire and interviews will be reported and discussed. Data to be examined includes teachers' qualifications and experience, numbers and types of handicapped children integrated into regular classrooms, as well as input from teachers and other professionals regarding useful courses and skills, knowledge, and attitudes essential to an Early Childhood teacher in an integrated classroom.

## QUESTIONNAIRES

Ninety-nine of the one hundred forty teachers contacted responded to the questionnaire for a return of 71%. The greatest response was from teachers in classrooms at the early childhood level. Seventy-nine out of ninety kindergarten and primary teachers responded (88%) as compared to twenty out of fifty special education teachers (40%).

### Teachers' Experience

Of the ninety-nine respondents, thirty-seven had

experience of five years or less, while sixty-one had more than five years' experience (see Table I). One gave no indication of experience. Forty-seven were teaching at the kindergarten level. twenty-nine were teaching grade one and twenty were teaching special education classes. Three were at that time teaching grade two, but had previously taught kindergarten or grade one. An examination of previous experience showed that twenty-three teachers had at one time taught kindergarten, forty-three had taught at the primary level (grades one to three). sixteen had taught special education, and thirteen had no previous experience or no experience with a level other than that which they were presently teaching. In some cases the exact meaning of the response was impossible to determine. Twenty-one teachers had previous experience ranging from kindergarten and primary, primary and elementary, to primary through secondary. Sixty-six teachers had handicapped children in their classrooms at the time of the study. This included twenty special education classes. This means that forty-six teachers were in integrated classrooms. Teachers in thirty-three classrooms had no handicapped children in their classes.

Education of Teachers

Eighty-five of the teachers held a Bachelor of

TABLE I

TEACHERS' YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

| EXPERIENCE | KINDERGARTEN | PRIMARY | SPECIAL EDUCATION | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 Years or less | 20 | 6 | 11 | 37 |
| Over 5 Years | 27 | 25 | 9 | 61 |
| Not Given | | 1 | | 1 |

Education degree and one had both Bachelor and Master of Education degrees. Six had other degrees and seven had not completed a degree. Sixty of these teachers had an Early Childhood major. eleven majored in Special Education, and two had a double major of Early Childhood and Special Education. Twenty-six had other majors. Twelve of the Early Childhood majors and fourteen of the Special Education majors had taken courses in addition to their degrees. Seventy-three teachers had taken no additional courses.

Seventy-six teachers had received all or most of their teacher education at the University of Alberta, two at the University of Calgary, and twenty-one were educated out-of-province. Table II summarizes teachers' educational backgrounds.

Handicapped Children

Question one asked for the number of special needs children in the classrooms and the nature of the handicap. There were three hundred seventeen special needs children in ninety-nine classrooms. Of these, one hundred seventy-six were in Special Education classrooms, eighty-nine were in kindergarten classes, and fifty-two were in primary classrooms.* Table III shows the total number of respondents in kindergarten, primary, and Special Education classrooms and the total number of handicapped children in each

TABLE 11

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF TEACHERS, INCLUDING DEGREE GRANTING UNIVERSITY, DEGREE EARNED, AND AREA OF MAJOR

| University | University Of Alberta | University Of Calgary | Out-Of-Province |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 76 | 2 | 21 |

| Degree | B.Ed. | B.Ed./M.Ed | Other | None |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 85 | 1 | 6 | 7 |

| Major | ECE | Spec. Ed. | ECE/Spec. Ed. | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 60 | 11 | 2 | 26 |

TABLE III

NUMBER OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

IN RESPONDING CLASSROOMS

| | Kindergarten | Primary | Special Education | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Responding Classrooms | 47 | 32 | 20 | 99 |
| Handicapped Children | 89 | 52 | 176 | 317 |

division.

Responses to the second part of the question (the nature of the handicap involved) were tabulated according to categories of exceptionality. These categories were defined on the basis of information obtained from readings and from consultants in the field of special education.

Some difficulty was encountered in drawing the categories; some impairments are cross sectional while the similarities between others make distinction difficult.

Mild mental retardation and learning disabilities. According to a consultant, mild mental retardation and learning disabilities are sometimes difficult to distinguish in young children, so one cannot be sure that these two categories do not overlap.

Speech problems and hearing. Speech problems go together with hearing impairment. However, speech impairment is not necessarily a hearing problem so it is a category in itself; the problem of definition lies in the diagnosis. Here again there may be some overlap.

Physical health impairment. This category includes orthopedic, diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, and so forth.

Cerebral palsy. While cerebral palsy is primarily a physical health problem, there is often mental impairment as well. It was, therefore, placed in a category by itself.

Behavior problems. Behavior problems are defined as

"not conforming to acceptable behavior from a classroom point of view". These behaviors result from a number of causes, including hyperactivity, home problems, and mental illness.

Language. This category refers to those children who speak only a language other than English. This was not included in the consultant's categories of exceptionality, but it was seen by a number of teachers as a condition that, while transitory in nature, puts those children in a special needs position while the condition prevails.

Other. The multiply handicapped, gifted, and those described as developmentally delayed were placed in this category. The term "developmental delay" was difficit to interpret. It is more a medical than an educational term and it has many implications. To someone in special education it would probably be interpreted as mild mental retardation, while to the medical person it may mean something quite different. The exact meaning intended by the teacher could not be assumed, so wherever encountered, it was placed in the "other" category.

It was interesting to note that only one gifted child was indicated. This may have been due to the wording of the questionnaire. Equally interesting was the fact that not one teacher indicated the presence of a health impaired child.

Being aware of the interrelation of many of the exceptionalities, the following categories were identified: (1) learning disabled, (2) mentally retarded, (3) hearing impaired, (4) visually impaired. (5) speech impaired, (6) physical health impaired, (7) cerebral palsy, (8) behavior problems, (9) language. (10) other. Teachers generally indicated the total number of special needs children in their classrooms and listed the various handicaps present. They did not always indicate the number of children with each handicap. It was, therefore, impossible to determine the actual incidence of each handicap. Totals indicate only the number of classrooms in which each category of exceptionality appeared, not the actual incidence of each. (see Table IV).

In the seventy-nine kindergarten and primary classrooms surveyed, children with learning disabilities and behavior problems were found in over half (fifty-four). Conversely, only two had visually impaired children.

Integrated classrooms

From the responses to question one, statistics could be compiled on the number of regular classrooms in which special needs children were enrolled. Of the responding kindergarten teachers, twenty had no special needs children enrolled at that time. Thirteen of the primary teachers had

TABLE IV

NUMBER OF CLASSROOMS IN WHICH EACH CATEGORY OF EXCEPTIONALITY APPEARED

| | Learning Disabled | Mentally Retarded | Hearing Impaired | Visually Impaired | Speech Impaired | Physical Health Impaired | Cerebral Palsy | Behavior Problems | Language | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kindergarten | 8 | 5 | 7 | 0 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 14 | 6 | 3 |
| Primary | 12 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 4 | 1 |
| Total | 20 | 10 | 7 | 2 | 10 | 7 | 5 | 34 | 10 | 4 |

no special needs children enrolled in their classrooms. When statistics for urban and rural districts were separated, the following results emerged: (1) in the urban district seventeen of twenty-six kindergartens and fourteen of eighteen primary classrooms had special needs children integrated; (2) in the rural area, ten of twenty-one kindergarten classes and five of fourteen primary classrooms were enrolled.

It had been assumed that there would be more integration of handicapped children in rural than urban classes because of a lack of alternatives. However, the data indicate a significantly higher percentage of integrated kindergarten and primary classrooms in the urban district (roughly 70% urban compared to 43% rural). These statistics may not reflect the actual situation. Questionnaires were distributed to most of the kindergarten and grade one teachers in the rural district. Those distributed in the urban district were sent to the principal of each school, and because of the nature of the study, would probably have been directed mainly to teachers of integrated classes. It is also possible that the rural district may not have the same diagnostic services available to it as the urban district, so some of the handicapping conditions may be going undetected.

It had also been assumed that more integration would be

taking place at the kindergarten level than at the primary level. This was true of the classes surveyed in the rural district (48% of kindergartens were integrated as compared to 36% of primary classrooms), but not in the urban district (65% of kindergartens integrated compared to 78% of primary classrooms). (See Table V).

Useful Course Work in Present Program

Question two related to course work which had proven useful to teachers in meeting the needs of (1) young children, (2) special needs children, and (3) young children with special needs. Upon examination, it became evident that this information could not be listed in terms of specific courses. Some respondents had given specific courses while others listed types of courses or course content. Before tabulating the results of this question, categories were drawn based on content of courses. The responses to the question fell into the following categories: (1) programming - Early Childhood Education (EdCI 304, EdCI 404, EdCI 426), (2) practicum - regular, (3) practicum - Special Education, (4) child development (general), (5) child development (special education), (6) diagnosis, assessment, and behavior management, (7) methods (general), (8) methods (Early Childhood Education), (9) methods (Special Education), and (10) pathology of handicapping conditions.

TABLE V

INTEGRATED CLASSES : RURAL AND URBAN

KINDERGARTEN

| | Total No. of Classes | Integrated Classes | Non-Integrated Classes | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rural | 21 | 10 | 11 | 48 |
| Urban | 26 | 17 | 9 | 65 |

PRIMARY

| | Total No. of Classes | Integrated Classes | Non-Integrated Classes | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rural | 14 | 5 | 9 | 36 |
| Urban | 18 | 14 | 4 | 78 |

NOTE: Because the focus of this study is on preparing teachers for special needs children integrated into regular classrooms, data regarding special education classrooms has been omitted at this time.

Table VI shows the number of respondents who indicated useful courses or course content encompassed by each category.

The data indicates that of the sixty respondents with Early Childhood Education majors, twenty-seven indicated that ECE programming was useful. However many noted that these courses were useful in preparing them for dealing with young "normal" children, not young children with special needs. The Special Education major who identified ECE programming as being useful, had a double major (ECE - Special Education).

Only three ECE majors and one with a major other than ECE or Special Education indicated that the regular practicum in a kindergarten or primary setting was useful. However, many noted that the experience of working with children provided the greatest learning experience for teachers. The general concensus was that not enough experience was provided in their university program and that much of the skill and knowledge they now possess was gained by experience as teachers in their own classrooms. As could be expected, only Special Education majors identified Special Education practicum as a useful course, since it would not be available to the others.

The teachers who stated that general knowledge of

TABLE VI

USEFUL COURSE WORK IN PRESENT

TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

| Area of Specialization of Respondents | Number of Respondents | E.C.E. Programming (304, 404, 426) | Practicum - Regular (In Kindergarten or Primary Setting) | Practicum - Special Education | Child Development (General) | Child Development - (Special) | Diagnosis, Assessment, Behavior Management | Method (General) | Method (E.C.E.) | Method (Special Education) | Pathology of Handicapping Conditions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| E.C.E. | 60 | 27 | 3 | 0 | 14 | 12 | 2 | 3 | 12 | 0 | 3 |
| Special Education | 13 | 1 | 0 | 12 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 1 |
| Other | 26 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Total | | 29 | 4 | 12 | 17 | 16 | 9 | 6 | 13 | 6 | 7 |

NOTE: Two teachers who had specialized in both Early Childhood and special eduation are included with special eduation majors because both were working in that area.

phases of development was useful indicated that it was useful only in meeting the needs of the normally developing young child. Many had not been able to take a course related to the development of special needs children. Most teachers (other than Special Education Majors) who identified courses such as diagnosis, assessment, behavior management, and pathology of handicapping conditions as being useful, had taken them as courses in addition to their regular programs.

It could be said, in summary, that the majority of teachers who responded to the questionnaire felt that while there were courses in the present ECE programs which prepared them to meet the needs of young children, none prepared them to deal with young children with special needs.

Several of the special education majors noted that special education courses focused mainly on the age group beyond early childhood. Therefore, while feeling that they were quite well prepared to meet the needs of handicapped elementary children in general, no courses they had taken as part of the Special Education program prepared them for preschool children with special needs.

Essential Skills and Knowledge

Question three asked, "What skills and knowledge did

you need, but didn't have, in order to work with these (special needs) children?" From the data on the questionnaires ten categories were drawn. For the sake of brevity, some categories combine similar or related skills and knowledge. Categories were drawn as follows: (1) observation and diagnostic skills, (2) classroom management and program planning, (3) practical application of theory and skills, (4) pathology of handicapping conditions, (5) behavioral management techniques, (6) interpersonal skills (child, parent, support staff), (7) teaching the handicapped student (methods and expectations) (8) support services and resources available, (9) assessment, evaluation, record keeping, reporting, (10) child development (physical and cognitive), normal, and deviations from the norm. Responses to this question are summarized in Table VII.

## INTERVIEWS

### Teachers

Ten of the respondents were the subject of follow-up interviews. The purpose of the interview was to get more in-depth information than a questionnaire elicits.

There was a consensus of opinion that student teachers are overloaded with theory before they have the practical experience to give it real meaning. Several suggestions

TABLE VII

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS IN INTEGRATED CLASSROOMS

| Area of Specialization of Respondents | Number of Respondents | Observation and Diagnostic Skills | Classroom Management and Program Planning | Practical Application of Theory and Skills | Pathology of Handicapping Conditions | Behavioral Management Techniques | Interpersonal Skills (child, parents, support staff) | Teaching the Handicapped students Methods and Expectations | Knowledge of Services and Resources Available | Assessment, Evaluation, Record Keeping, Reporting | Child Development (Physical & Cognitive) Normal and Deviations from Norm |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| E.C.E. | 60 | 18 | 14 | 6 | 18 | 4 | 6 | 20 | 12 | 9 | 18 |
| Special Education | 13 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Other | 26 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Total | | 23 | 22 | 16 | 23 | 15 | 12 | 27 | 16 | 13 | 21 |

were made as to how this could be remedied.

(1) As part of a course, beginning early in the first year, each student might assist a teacher for one day a week as an aide. This would give students a chance to work with and get to know children in a non-threatening situation, unlike the practicum when they are in charge of a class. As they took courses in theory, child development, and so forth, they could be observing at first hand, the children and the teacher. Questions arising from these observations could be raised in the classroom or at the university. They could be given assignments whereby they would observe a child over a period of time, learn how to keep records, do assessments, and obtain other pertinent information regarding the role of the teacher. In this way they could receive guidance from the university as to procedures and they could confer with the teacher as to the accuracy of their perceptions.

(2) Students should have an opportunity to spend a day with the various resource personnel (for example, a speech therapist, audiologist, or physiotherapist) in order to see at first hand what these jobs entail. It is not enough to hear about them. In order to really understand and remember the functions of each, students should know first hand the services they provide.

(3) All teachers stressed the importance of student

teachers receiving a solid knowledge of child development, both the physical and the cognitive, so that they may spot deviations from the norm and at the very least to be able to ask the right questions of the right people. In the observation class associated with the university, there should be children from infancy to school age, both normally developing and handicapped, so that students could become familiar with all stages of child development.

(4) Teachers were also unanimous in the view that an extended practicum would be beneficial to student teachers. Most felt a full day in the classroom was preferable to the half day which many had experienced. Some also felt the student teachers should not be assigned to one age group throughout the entire practicum. Exposure to children of various ages and grades would give the student more of an idea of the age group they would prefer to teach. In a program preparing teachers for special needs children, it would be important to assign the student to an integrated classroom for at least part of the practicum. In order to accommodate this wider experience, an extended practicum would be necessary.

(5) Teachers who had special needs children in their classrooms stressed the importance of knowing something about the handicapping condition before the child enters the classroom. Their main concern was for the child. The

teacher should be knowledgeable enough to be comfortable with the child, to prepare the other children for the handicapped child's entry, and to answer questions as they might arise. They felt a teacher education program should give a good overview of all handicaps and then provide each student teacher with well-indexed information for reference when the need arose.

(6) It is essential that teachers be aware of the support services and resource persons available to handicapped children and the necessary procedure for assessment. Teachers spoke of the frustrations of long delays in getting attention from overworked specialists, only to find medical referrals and so forth were necessary which resulted in further delay.

(7) Teachers with limited experience mentioned the trauma of parent interviews, particularly where a child was having difficulty. They felt they received little help in the area of interpersonal skills in their teacher education.

One questionnaire was returned incomplete but with a letter on the reverse side. It was incomplete because the respondent, although involved in a kindergarten "Home Program", was not a certified teacher. Her interest stemmed from the fact that she was the mother of a thirteen-year-old learning disabled child. In a follow-up interview she spoke of the trauma and frustration suffered by the undiagnosed

learning disabled child. That interview emphasized as nothing else could, the importance of teachers having some knowledge and understanding of special needs children.

Other Educators

Interviews were conducted with ten other educators including professors in Early Childhood Education, Educational Psychology, and Family Studies, the Coordinator of Program Approval at Early Childhood Services, the Director of Staff Training for Integrated Pre-school Programs at the University of Alberta, the Director of the Alberta Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (Edmonton), the Supervisor of Special Education for the County of Lacombe, two Coordinators of Early Childhood Services at the district level, and the Program Teacher for the Calgary Board of Education. Each interviewee was asked the question, "From the perspective of your professional capacity, what skills and knowledge do you see as essential for an early childhood teacher to possess in order to teach in an integrated classroom?" Most included certain attitudes as well as skills and knowledge. These are included in the resume. A composite of their responses is given in the following resume.

(1) Knowledge of Child Development:

All individuals interviewed maintained that a solid

knowledge of child development (social, emotional, physical, and cognitive) was absolutely essential. They noted that to assess a child's capabilities, the teacher must know what to expect during each stage of development. One educator put it this way: "Teachers cannot be expected to be specialists who can diagnose, prescribe, and treat the various handicapping conditions they encounter in children, but they should be child development specialists". Teachers must first be thoroughly familiar with normal child development, and then they can begin to examine the various differences which occur. Exceptionality can be understood only when normal development is understood. It is critical to be able to discern a deficiency and get treatment for it. In the physical realm, for instance, teachers should have a better working knowledge of the development of the eye muscles and fine motor control, in the physiological sense, in order to understand the deficiency and build a suitable program for the child. They have to know how children learn and the phases they go through to learn. Each area of learning is a skill unto itself, but all follow a sequential pattern.

Each area of exceptionality needs special training, but since this is not possible in a four-year program, it was suggested that courses could give a basic understanding of a full range of problems that arise, where to go for help, and some idea of how to handle each in terms of curriculum

adaptation.

(2) Observational Skills:

There was a consensus among eight of the interviewees that teachers must be able to recognize a child in difficulty and to see beyond the "behavioral nuisance." They should be able to pinpoint different impairments so they can at least ask the right questions of the right people. If teachers cannot at least raise questions early in the kindergarten year, it is very unusual for anything concrete to happen all year.

(3) Interpersonal Skills:

Six of the interviewees were of the opinion that one of the most important courses a university could create for pre-service training would be a communications course. Teachers are often defensive because they don't know how to communicate honestly with people. Not only must they communicate with children and possibly support staff on a daily basis, but it is crucial that the teacher have the confidence to approach the family and establish a relationship whereby total knowledge of the handicapped child may be obtained. Teachers must be made to realize the great trauma for parents of a handicapped child, and to initiate a relationship which will provide optimally for the child under prevailing conditions.

(4) Teaching Methods for Handicapped Students and

Strategies for Integration:

Three individuals noted that many things which teachers do not normally have to worry about in a regular classroom become important in an integrated setting and teachers should be aware of them. For instance, the transition period from one activity to another can be a problem without careful pre-planning by the teacher. Another example is a hearing impaired child cannot lip read if the teacher stands near a window or turns away. Many special needs children require closeness and even actual contact to learn. Teachers must be aware that some handicapped children must "overlearn" a task before they can do it.

Because many handicapped children have not had the experiences that other children have, teachers must be prepared to use a multi-approach to teaching. This is also dictated by limiting factors due to the particular handicap. Special attention must be paid to gross motor activities and fine motor and perceptual skills, keeping in mind whatever limitations the child happens to have. They must be specially planned to provide optimum conditions for growth.

(5) Skills in Interpreting and Assessing:

Interviewees unanimously agreed that teachers need to be familiar with assessment tools and to know how to assess. They must know how to identify what is functional and stress

what is important. Too much emphasis should not be placed on the product, but rather on the process of learning and the progress that the child makes in looking ahead to the next step. Teachers must recognize and be satisfied with small improvements. A different approach to testing may have to be adopted. For instance, questions may have to be read to some children and their answers taped. Report cards may have to be modified, so that positive progress may be reported in areas not normally included. Teachers need to learn to observe and assess the child in different settings such as in school, on the playground, or in the home.

(6) Program Planning:

Teachers must know how to design a program for a child, not a group. They must be able to build a child's self-esteem by being able to evolve a program with realistic goals and expectations. They must know when to provide individual instruction and when to provide group involvement. After an assessment has been made of a child, the teacher must set goals and plan a program to meet the needs of that child. This appears to be a real weakness in present teacher education programs. Many teachers do not know where to begin in terms of writing goals and objectives for special needs children. The program needs to focus on using the strengths of the children to overcome the weaknesses. Teachers should know exactly why they are doing a particular

activity. This is important for all children, but doubly so for the handicapped child where every step has to be defined and taught. All activities should stem from a good developmental base so the teacher will know when a child is ready to move on.

(7) Knowledge of Handicapping Conditions:

All those interviewed agreed that teachers must have a knowledge of the etiology of handicaps and understand each type of exceptionality. The medical element is essential in that many disabilities and special needs are cross sectional. There are often other medical factors (such as allergies or medication) which influence a child's learning, behavior, and personality. Even the fact of immobility may result in emotional problems.

Another reason for the teacher to be knowledgeable about handicapping conditions is that they must prepare the other children in such a way that they acquire a feeling of acceptance by a personal knowledge of the handicapping condition. Other children may already have a stereotypical attitude from parents or they may have been frightened by seeing a handicapped person in public. Often the normal child is afraid because of the differences and some may think the disability is communicable. The teacher must be sensitive to this fear and be ready to help the child develop a fuller understanding.

Teachers must first prepare themselves by becoming knowledgeable and at the same time prepare and plan a simple way of explaining about disabilities through things such as a visual aid or a guest speaker.

The teacher must also be prepared to alleviate the fears of parents of regular students who are often concerned that their children may imitate possible undesirable behavior of some special needs children. Research has shown that this seldom happens.

(8) Awareness of Support Services and Resources: Eight of the ten persons interviewed stated that teachers cannot be expert in all areas. Therefore, it is essential that teachers know how to establish a line of contact. They must be made aware of support services, both local and extended, which are available for handicapped children. This information should be shared with university staff members and be included as part of the course content. In addition, updated information should also be part of a well indexed reference file given to each student.

Teachers need to know the procedures for referral. They need to know that parents' consent must be obtained before a referral may be made and that some assessments cannot be done without a medical referral.

(9) Structuring a Program for Social Interaction: Activities should be planned in such a way that they get

handicapped and normally developing children together naturally. If children feel they are compelled to work with and help a less able child, resentment may develop. There must be careful pre-planning so all the children are working toward a common goal. Structuring such a program can be overwhelming at first so teachers need on-sight guidance for the initial stages. Student teachers must receive this practice during their practicum.

(10) Case Conferencing:

Four of the interviewees stressed the importance of teachers having skill in case conferencing. They must know how to use it, when to use it, and who to have on it for continuity. All those concerned must be included. It is essential that the parents be part of the conferencing so they can be aware of the recommendations which are made. Real progress can be made only if all concerned are kept informed and work together. Recommendations, follow-up, and progress must all be included in carefully kept files.

## PHILOSOPHY AND ATTITUDES

All interviewees stressed the importance of the teachers having the proper attitudes toward children, themselves, and other people. They all maintained that teachers need to have a philosophy of education which leaves

room for individual differences.

Teachers must be aware of the values they hold about themselves in relation to education. They must ask themselves why they entered the profession. Was it to have a secure, respected position? Did they like the idea of having control over a group of people? Teachers must be in the profession because they want to help people, to contribute to society in some way.

Teachers must have concern for the individual child and realize they are teaching children, not grades or groups. They must have a feel for children which enables them to set up an emotional or learning climate which allows children to make mistakes and recognize the mistakes as a route to learning, to go at their own pace and compete not with others but with themselves. They must be able to provide quality activities which will give the child a feeling of success and to recognize what gives a child this feeling of success. One individual felt that positive reinforcement is often misused in that teachers give false praise, but children know whether or not the praise is honest and deserved. It is not always easy to recognize what gives the child a feeling of success, so there must be a mutuality of respect for honest dialogue to occur.

Flexibility is the key to integration. Teachers must be accepting of the fact that some handicapped children

will not be able to do some things, or may have to do them in a different way. The teacher must be able to adapt the activity or modify the usual response in such a way that the child can feel a sense of self esteem, self confidence, and self-acceptance. At the same time, the teacher should not let the labelling of a handicap set the parameters for expectations since we really have no idea what anyone can achieve.

It is the duty of the teacher to help children accept their disability or difference. This is crucial. They must feel there is nothing wrong with being different. Too often we feel we must stress the similarities in children, but we should also share the differences and let children know that diversity is good. When children can accept themselves they can then fend off disrespect or disregard from the insensitive. When other children ridicule the handicapped child the teacher must confirm in their minds that the disability is real and that it is a serious matter and they must be prepared to give a frank explanation of how and why the handicap occurred. In the classroom, the teacher must foster the attitude that we help one another. By planning together for extra activities, the class will come to accept that everyone has to be considered.

Teachers should be willing to assume the role of advocate for all children in general and special needs

children in particular. They must be willing to "stand up" for children, be concerned about issues such as the lack of legal rights for children, child abuse, and the shortage of therapists.

They have to try to explain what is needed in terms of support services and to make an effort to get these services. They must be involved in fostering positive attitudes toward integration within the school and the community. After the functional skills of a student have been identified, the teacher must be willing to follow-up all along the line to see that there is continuity so that the child stays "on the track".

## SUMMARY

Teachers generally feel inadequately prepared to deal with special needs children in regular classrooms. They expressed a particular need for greater knowledge and/or skills in teaching methods and expectations for handicapped students, observation and diagnostic skills, program planning for special needs children, pathology of handicapping conditions, and both normal and abnormal child development. Without exception, they stressed the importance of teachers' philosophy of education and a positive attitude toward children in general.

# CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate and assess the need for an integrated early childhood-special education teacher preparation program. In order to make this judgement and then propose possible revisions or additions to present teacher education programs, supporting literature was perused and teachers in the field were approached via a questionnaire and interviews. In addition, professionals in various educational capacities were interviewed. Data from these sources were examined and serve as the basis of recommendations for components of a teacher preparation program.

## SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Integration of special needs children into regular classes is still a controversial issue. According to the literature on the subject, the concept itself is widely supported. The controversy concerns the amount and type of integration and the methods of implementation.

There are many dimensions to the problem. As in most social issues there is a political dimension. The

government of Alberta reacted to public pressure for change without first laying the required ground-work. If the goal of integration is to reach the needs of each child, and not merely to serve a cause, all those involved in the integration process must be prepared. This includes universities, local school boards, school administrators, teachers, students, and parents of handicapped and non-handicapped children alike.

Teachers in Early Childhood and Special Education programs were surveyed in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in present programs and to elicit suggestions as to revisions or additions which would better prepare teachers for their changing role.

The main concerns of Early Childhood teachers were in regard to their lack of (1) teaching methods and expectations for handicapped children, (2) knowledge of the pathology of handicapping conditions, (3) observation and diagnostic skills, (4) classroom management and program planning in an integrated classroom, and (5) child development (both normal and deviations from the norm). Special Education teachers in general felt that they were not prepared for young children with special needs.

Other professionals interviewed put a high priority on (1) knowledge of child development, (2) skills in observation, interpreting, and assessing, (3) knowledge of

handicapping conditions, (4) an awareness of support services and resources, (5) interpersonal skills. and (6) teachers' philosophy and attitudes.

Useful courses mentioned most often were early childhood education programming (EdCI 304, EdCI 404, EdCI 426) and child development (both general and special). However, teachers did indicate that the ECE Programming courses prepared them only for teaching young children, not young children with special needs. Special education teachers cited the Special Education Practicum as being useful, but likewise, it did not prepare them specifically for young special needs children.

Not all respondents listed useful courses taken during their teacher training, nor did they all give suggestions as to skills and knowledge required by teachers in integrated classrooms. The majority of these teachers indicated there were no special needs children in their classrooms.

More than half the responding early childhood teachers were working in integrated classrooms. The highest incidence of exceptionality in these classrooms was behavior or emotional problems, followed by the learning disabled.

The vast majority of teachers in both school districts received their teacher training at the University of Alberta.

Several teachers had experience at levels other than

early childhood or special education. None felt they had been adequately prepared to teach in integrated classrooms.

The literature suggested that some teachers would express resentment that new demands were being placed upon them with the move toward integration. However, of the limited number of teachers interviewed, the attitude expressed was one of concern for the well being of all the children in their classrooms. Any frustration expressed was the result of the conviction that they were not able, because of lack of preparation and resources, to meet the needs of all these children. Teachers in the rural school districts were particularly supportive of integration because of the lack of alternative classes near home for many special needs children.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers in early childhood classrooms expressed an overwhelming need for changes in the present teacher preparation program. Integration of special needs children into regular classrooms is taking place at a relatively rapid pace, as evidenced by the fact that over half the responding teachers in this study were working in integrated classrooms. In the city of Edmonton over 70% of the classrooms surveyed were integrated.

With an estimated 10% to 15% of all children having special needs. there will be few early childhood teachers who do not work with such children. Even if the more obviously handicapped are not integrated, behavior or emotional problems and learning disabilities (which comprised over half of the special needs children identified for this study) will almost certainly surface in any early childhood classroom. Teachers must be prepared to deal with them.

If the integration movement is to reach the needs of children, classroom teachers must be actively involved. They should have a solid knowledge base from which to influence programs and curriculum for integrated classrooms, school policies on integration, and provision of adequate resources and support staff. It is incumbent upon universities to prepare them for their role.

Many suggestions for preparing teachers for integration were given in the supporting literature. Teachers and other professionals involved in this study reiterated many of these as well as putting forth several which were not mentioned in the literature. In the following section these suggestions are stated as the rationale for each recommendation.

Rationale:

Early Childhood teachers said they were prepared to teach normally developing young children, but not those with special needs. Recent studies (Evaluation of Programs for Learning Disabled students in Edmonton Public Schools, 1980; Dyson and Kubo, 1980; Barros, 1983) also found that teachers felt their training in this area to be inadequate. Early Childhood Education Programming and Methods courses must be adapted to include some strategies from special education so teachers are better able to meet the needs of all children (CELDIC Report, 1970; The Report of Early Childhood Services Task Force on Teacher Competence, 1976; Barros, 1983; McIntosh, 1979; Mori, 1979; Shapiro, 1979).

*Recommendation 1: ECE Programming and Methods courses should include strategies for integration, teaching methods for handicapped children, goal setting and program planning, and structuring a program for social interaction.*

Rationale:

The CELDIC Report (1970), the Report of the Early Childhood Services Task Force on Teacher Competence (1976); the SEECC Report (1979), and the Report of the Task Force on Children and Others with Learning Disabilities (1979), stressed the importance of the teacher having a solid knowledge of child development. The teachers and others

involved in this study indicated that in teacher education there was not sufficient understanding of child development (normal and deviations from the norm). The emphasis in the undergraduate program was on cognitive development. Teachers need knowledge in the social, emotional, and physical areas as well. They should have at least a basic understanding of anatomy and physiology which will enable them to discern deficiencies and pinpoint problems in order to get help from the proper sources. Understanding a deficiency would also enable them to better understand techniques for remediating or circumventing it in the program developed for that child.

Because most university students have limited experience with children, a study of child development can be meaningful only if students have the opportunity of observing and working with children of various ages, both normally developing and exceptional. Observation classes associated with the university should be structured to provide this experience.

*Recommendation 2: Child development courses should be a balance of instruction related to the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of children. In addition there must be some focus on the ways in which a child's development may deviate from the norm.*

Rationale:

Many teachers are apprehensive about teaching some special needs children because they lack knowledge of handicapping conditions. They must be made aware of the pathology of handicapping conditions, including the medical and emotional factors which may affect the child's learning, behavior, and personality. They must be able to recognize the child's limitations without over compensating or losing sight of other qualities. (CELDIC Report, 1970; Report of the Task Force on Children and Others with Learning Disabilities, 1979; Barros, 1983; Brady, 1979; Harlow, 1979; and McIntosh, 1979. Teachers should be comfortable with handicapped children and be able to deal effectively with both the child and the family. They should also be able to alleviate the fears or misapprehensions other children and parents may have in relation to the various disabilities.

*Recommendation 3: A course should be provided which would acquaint Early Childhood Education students with a wide range of handicapping conditions, including the emotional and medical factors. Ways of communicating this understanding should also be included.*

Rationale:

Teachers in this study, as well as those in a study

carried out by Barros (1983), stressed the importance of observation and diagnostic skills for all Early Childhood teachers. The CELDIC Report (1970), the Early Childhood Services Task Force on Teacher Competence (1976), the Report of the Task Force on Children and Others with Learning Disabilities (1979), and McIntosh (1979), concur. Teachers must be able to identify the less obvious impairments so that referral can be made early in the year. Many mild to moderate disabilities go undetected for several months. Parents are often unwilling or afraid to pursue the matter so the initial contact (the teacher) must be prepared.

*Recommendation 4: Diagnostic skills must be incorporated into the observation component of the program.*

Rationale:

The Early Childhood Services Task Force on Teacher Competence (1976) and the Report of the Task Force on Children and Others with Learning Disabilities (1979) stated that teachers should be aware of the resources for handicapped children. Following detection of a disability, teachers must know where to go for help and how to proceed. The key to remediation is early referral. It is the experience of Early Childhood Services consultants that if referral is not made within the first three months of the school year, it is unusual for any concrete action to be

taken that year. The teacher must be aware of support services and resources, both local and extended, which are available for special needs children. They must also know the necessary assessment procedures.

*Recommendation 5: A component of a course should familiarize education students with the various resource personnel. This should be an on-sight experience, learning at first hand the functions of each. They should also be made aware of materials, equipment, and funds available for handicapped students and with the procedure for obtaining them. As well, the students should be provided with a well-indexed information file for reference as required.*

Rationale:

Students in teacher education appear to be overloaded with theory before they have the experience to give that theory real meaning. The CELDIC Report (1970) and the Early Childhood Services Task Force on Teacher Competence (1976) stressed that theory and knowledge should be integrated with a practical activity component. Hutton (1980) was concerned that few teachers are exposed to exceptional children during training. They need opportunities to work with and observe children (both normally developing and exceptional) of different ages in a variety of settings. They need the opportunity to apply theory and skills as they are acquired,

raising questions both in the school and at the university level. Teachers and consultants felt that students would benefit by regular contact with teachers in the field. Access to off-campus inservices and workshops would give students an insight into the realities of teaching which cannot be gained in a university setting.

*Recommendation 6: In addition to the regular practicum, provision should be made for education students, early in their programs, to work with teachers in a variety of classrooms (perhaps as teachers' aides) for a specific period of time. To further promote contact with teachers in the field, an active current network should be established between the university and ECS consultants to bring teachers and students together through off-campus workshops and inservice. Allowance would have to be made within regular courses for attendance.*

Rationale:

Teachers receive little preparation and practice in the interpersonal skills required daily in dealing with other professionals, classroom aides, and parents (CELDIC Report, 1970). Early Childhood Services sees interpersonal skills as the single most important competency for early childhood teachers, (Early Childhood Services Task Force Report on Teacher Compentence, 1976). This is an important skill for

all teachers, but particularly so for the teacher in an integrated classroom. It is essential for the child's well-being that all those concerned are communicating and working together.

Recommendation 7: *Teachers in training must be given strategies and actual practice in the interpersonal skills required in a variety of situations.*

Rationale:

Early Childhood Services consultants and other professionals interviewed stressed the importance of teachers' philosophy and their attitudes toward children. A respect for all children regardless of their situation is essential.

Recommendation 8: *The importance of the proper attitudes toward all children, and the teachers' role in conveying these attitudes to the children must be stressed in all facets of the teacher education program.*

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. We do not know enough about the impact of integration. The following questions need additional study:
   (1) What are the social and emotional effects upon children with the various handicaps?
   (2) Should handicapped children be placed singly in a

regular classroom, or is it desirable to place several in the same classroom?

(3) Are the children actually being integrated or are they simply placed in a regular setting?

(4) What is the maximum class size a teacher can be expected to handle with the addition of one or more special needs children?

2. As teacher education programs are revised to meet changing conditions, periodic follow-up studies should be done to determine which courses are particularly useful in preparing teachers, or conversely, what aspects of the program need further revision.

3. Study should be done on a system whereby teachers' programs could be kept on file for reference in the event of a study such as this. Teachers found it difficult to recall specific courses taken several years previous.

4. There should be examination of the merit of an After Degree Program or a Masters' Program which would provide a more appropriate background for either early childhood teachers or special education teachers working with special needs children.

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# APPENDIX A

## TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

# QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____

Name of School _____

Telephone (School) _____

Grade or type of program presently taught _____

_____

Degree(s) _____ OR Years of Training _____

_____

Major: Early Childhood (___)

Special Education (___)

Other (___)

Don't know (___)

University _____

Years of Experience: Over 5 years (__) 5 years or less (__)

Grades or special programs formerly taught _____

_____

Courses in Early Childhood Education or Special Education taken since graduation:

Course name _____ Where taken _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

None (__) Can't remember (__)

1. Are there any children with special needs presently in your classroom? (__) Number of children _____
   Type of handicap _____
2. What University courses, if any, prepared you to meet the needs of the children in your classroom? Please indicate those courses which (1) prepared you to work with young children, (2) helped you in terms of special needs children, (3) were related to young children with special needs. _____
   _____
   _____
3. What skills and knowledge did you need, but didn't have, in order to work with these children?
   _____
   _____
   _____
4. Would you be willing to be interviewed for more information? Yes (__) No (__)
5. Would you allow me to observe in your classroom at a specified time? Yes (__) No (__)

(If you answered YES to question(s) 4 and/or 5, please include your home telephone number so that I may contact you for an appointment. Telephone _____.)

# APPENDIX B

## GUIDELINE FOR INTERVIEWS

# GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWS

I TEACHERS

Elaborate on:

(1) Nature of the disabilities (if any) of children in your classrooms;

(2) Helpful courses taken during initial teacher preparation program (or courses taken in addition to degree);

(3) Skills and knowledge required by a teacher in order to deal effectively with special needs children.

II OTHER PROFESSIONALS

From the perspective of your professional capacity, what do you see as essential skills and knowledge for an early childhood teacher to possess in order to successfully meet the needs of all children in an integrated classroom?

# APPENDIX C

## ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

1. Early Childhood Education
2. Special Education

# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCTION

## A non-education

Four full courses to be taken OUTSIDE the Faculty of Education

(i) Not to be taken in: N/A

(ii) May be used to pursue personal interests or to meet minimum requirements of a second or third teaching specialization - see the registration guide for other teaching specializations and such related fields as school library, speech, intercultural education.

## B teaching specialization

SIX FULL courses to be taken OUTSIDE the Faculty of Education. At least three of these courses are required to meet the minimum requirements of your chosen specialization.

(i) 3 full course equivalents to be selected from 3 of the following areas (Art, Drama, Library Science, English, Family, Movement, Music). See ECE Counselling Guide for specific courses.

(ii) A subject emphasis must be developed by taking three full course equivalents in one subject area. For recommendation see the different subject areas in the Education Calendar.

## C basic education courses

THREE FULL courses to be taken in the Faculty of Education.

(i) At least one full course equivalent in Ed. Psychology.

(ii) At least one full course equivalent in Ed. Foundations.

(iii) At least one half course in Ed. Administration.

(iv) One additional half course in Ed. Psychology or Ed. Foundations or Ed. Administration.

## D curriculum and instruction courses

FOUR FULL COURSE EQUIVALENTS IN THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION (AND, CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION COURSES IN PHYS. ED. SERVICES).

(i) Four different curriculum and instruction subject areas must be selected.

(ii) See calendars for appropriate junior and senior courses. Teaching specialization requirements are:
a. One half course in Language CI (Ed CI 229, 329, 429, 430)
b. One half course in Reading CI (Ed CI 224, 323, 424)
c. Ed CI 404

## E field experiences

ONE FULL COURSE EQUIVALENT REQUIRED (NORMALLY: ED PR 201/ED PR 301)

## F free options

TWO FULL COURSE EQUIVALENTS TO BE SELECTED FROM INSIDE OR OUTSIDE THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION (SPECIAL EDUCATION HAS ONLY ONE FREE OPTION).

# SPECIAL EDUCATION

## A non-education

Four full courses to be taken OUTSIDE the Faculty of Education

May be used to pursue personal interests or to meet minimum requirements of a second or third teaching specialization - see the calendar for other teaching specializations and such related fields as school library, speech, intercultural education.

## B teaching specialization

SIX FULL courses to be taken OUTSIDE the Faculty of Education. At least three of these courses are required to meet the minimum requirements of your chosen specialization.

I. a. Educational Psychology (4 fce's)

i. ED PSY 251 and 253
OR
ED PSY 341 & 343 (not to be taken by first year students)

ii. ED PSY 351 and 355

iii. ED PSY 357 & 361

iv. ED PSY 461 and one of ED PSY 453 or 459.

b. Three full course equivalents to be taken outside the Faculty of Education and selected from one subject area (Art, English, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Science, Second Language, Social Studies)*. See the Counselling Guides or the Calendar for recommended courses in the different subject areas.

## C basic education courses

THREE FULL courses to be taken in the Faculty of Education.

(i) At least one full course equivalent in Ed. Psychology.

(ii) At least one full course equivalent in Ed. Foundations.

(iii) At least one half course in Ed. Administration.

(iv) One additional half course in Ed. Psychology or Ed. Foundations or Ed. Administration.

## D curriculum and instruction courses

FOUR FULL COURSE EQUIVALENTS IN THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION (AND, CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION COURSES IN PHYS. ED. SERVICES).

(i) Four different curriculum and instruction subject areas must be selected.

(ii) See calendars for appropriate junior and senior courses. Teaching specialization requirements are:
See Special Education Program Counselling Guide for recommendations in Curriculum and Instruction

## E field experiences

ONE FULL COURSE EQUIVALENT REQUIRED (NORMALLY: ED PR 201/ED PR 301)
Note: Additional practicum credits will replace course slots in this order: non-education, teaching specialization and free options. Faculty members will advise.

## F free options

TWO FULL COURSE EQUIVALENTS TO BE SELECTED FROM INSIDE OR OUTSIDE THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION (SPECIAL EDUCATION HAS ONLY ONE FREE OPTION).

APPENDIX D

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Permission for Research
2. Covering Letter to Principals
3. Covering Letter to teachers

# EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 19, 1982

Mr. W. A. Kiffiak
School Liaison Officer
Division of Field Services
The University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
T6G 2G5

Dear Mr. Kiffiak:

Re: Research Request - "Integrating Early Childhood/Special Education in a Teacher Training Program: A Feasibility Study" - Darlo Albrecht

The above research request has been approved on a permissive basis following examination by our department and consultation with Dr. A. L. Charette, Supervisor Special Education.

The approval is subject to the condition that a sample of Early Childhood Education teachers be used. As there are only 35 Special Education teachers at the grade levels indicated, it would be appropriate to have a sample of a similar number of ECS teachers. I am enclosing a list of the Kindergarten and grade one Special Education teachers in Edmonton Public Schools.

Sincerely,

T. A. Blowers, PhD.
Director Instructional Resources
Research, Liaison

TAB/jmr

cc: A.L. Charette
J. Blakey
D. Albrecht

University of Alberta
Education Building
T6G 2G5
May 3, 1982

I have been given leave to distribute this questionnaire to teachers in the city of Edmonton on a permissive basis. Your school was selected at random.

I would appreciate it if you would give the enclosed questionnaires to one kindergarten teacher and one grade one teacher in your school. Teachers who have children with special needs in their classrooms would be my preference; however I am interested in the views of all teachers, so this is not a prerequisite.

As stated in my covering letter, names of teachers or schools will not be used in any way in this study nor for any purpose other than this study. If you have any questions concerning the questionnaire or my study, please telephone me at home (436-5070) or at my office at the University (432-5123).

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Darlo Albrecht

University of Alberta
Education Building
T6G 2G5
May 3, 1982

I have been given leave to distribute this questionnaire to teachers in the city of Edmonton on a permissive basis. Your school was selected because Dr. Blowers indicated that on your staff you have Special Education teachers at the kindergarten and grade one levels. I would appreciate it if you would give the enclosed questionnaires to these teachers.

If there are other Early Childhood teachers in your school who would like to have input in this study I would be glad to deliver more questionnaires. I am particularly interested in hearing from teachers who have children with special needs in their classrooms; however, I am interested in the views of all teachers so this is not a prerequisite.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Darlo Albrecht